

WYCLIFFE COLLEGE LIBRARY



3 1761 02875 5247





LIBRARY

Wycliffe College

TORONTO

Stacks

Shelf No. BV 4253. B39

STACKS +

Register No. 12818

Nov 5, 19

1.00

35r

1.00
1.00
1.00



The Church Pulpit Library

THE
GRACE OF EPISCOPACY
AND OTHER SERMONS





THE GRACE OF EPISCOPACY

AND OTHER SERMONS
BY H. C. BEECHING, D.LITT.
CANON OF THE COLLEGIATE
CHURCH OF ST. PETER, WEST-
MINSTER; PREACHER TO THE
HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF LIN-
COLN'S INN; AND CHAPLAIN
TO THE BISHOP OF CARLISLE



JAMES NISBET AND CO. LTD.
21 BERNERS STREET, LONDON. 1905

45205724 ✓

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.
At the Ballantyne Press

CONTENTS

SERMON	PAGE
I. THE GRACE OF EPISCOPACY . . .	1
II. THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OF WEST- MINSTER ABBEY	19
III. THE SON OF MAN THE SON OF GOD	34
IV. IMMORTALITY	51
V. THE GOLDEN CITY	69
VI. THE HOPE OF CREATION . . .	85
VII. SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT . . .	99
VIII. THE WORK OF LIFE	115
IX. HOLIDAYS	130
X. CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY . . .	145
XI. THE TWO GIRDINGS	163
XII. THE GRACE OF KINGSHIP . . .	177
XIII. PROFANITY	190
XIV. EDUCATION	201
XV. THE EARLY RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF CHILDREN	215
XVI. BIBLE-READING IN THE HOME .	235
XVII. JOHN RUSKIN	244

THE
GRACE OF EPISCOPACY
AND OTHER SERMONS.

I.

THE GRACE OF EPISCOPACY.

PREACHED IN YORK MINSTER ON THE FEAST OF THE
PRESENTATION, 1904.

“ And Jesus called them to Him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them ; and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you : but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister : and whosoever would be first among you shall be servant of all. For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”—MARK x. 42-5.

THERE had been an attempt, you will remember, on the part of two of the apostles to secure what seemed to the rest an unwarrantable pre-eminence ; and our Lord, while dealing very tenderly with the two brethren, took

occasion to explain to all what pre-eminence in His society must mean, and what authority, as He understood it, really consisted in. To make the matter quite clear He put two pictures before them side by side. The first was the lordship of the Gentiles; the throne and state of Herod or Pilate, whom men strove to conciliate with presents and before whose frown they trembled. And then He turned their eyes upon Himself, whose Kingship they acknowledged with all their hearts and wished to share, and they saw One not being served, but serving; not exacting gifts, but giving them; surrounded not by obsequious courtiers, but by disciples whom He taught and trained; and devoting all the hours of the day to the service of His people instead of laying claim upon their service. The contrast was deep and unforgettable, and the lesson from the contrast easy to draw; it taught them that the only pre-eminence in the divine society was to be pre-eminence in ministering, and the only true authority that of influence.

We are met together this morning, fathers and brethren, as a province of the kingdom of Christ in England, to invoke the special blessing of the Holy Spirit upon two of our number, who having served the King, as we well believe, with all their heart and mind and strength in this and that great city of His dominion, and approved themselves faithful and wise stewards, are to be sent forth now to still wider opportunities of service. And it is natural and fitting, especially on this great festival of our Lord's dedication in His Father's house, that to hearten them, if we may, for the new mission, we should fix our thoughts, with them, upon Him who is the one and only model of a true governor, and remind them and ourselves of what sort is the authority which He now commits to them in His kingdom.

“The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.” So our Lord sums up for us the secret of His sway over our hearts. It was not, as we know, by a mere voice from

the heavenly places, proclaiming the divine sovereignty and appealing for obedience, that man was, or could have been, recovered from his slavery to sin. "It cost more to redeem men's souls." For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven. The Son of God came down among us that as Son of Man He might understand our case, our temptations as well as our sins, our ignorance no less than our errors; and having thus by His perfect sympathy understood our needs be able to supply them out of the fulness of His new divine manhood, the manhood which could not but find its life and blessedness in giving, as God finds His life and blessedness in giving. The Son of Man, then, came to minister. Being God He could not come otherwise. And so any authority in the Son of Man's kingdom must needs be an authority which gives, which ministers.

Let us for a few brief moments remind ourselves what light this doctrine of our Lord's, and still more His example as the true Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, sheds

upon the two great branches of episcopal authority—the authority to teach and to rule.

(1) We remember that our Master, albeit to the innermost circle of the disciples He spoke with joy of His commission from the Father, yet in His public teaching appealed in proof of His message to the conviction it inspired in the conscience of His hearers. To the simple and sincere the teaching commended itself; it went home to heart and will and rekindled the flame of faith in God. “Lord,” they said, “Thou hast words of eternal life”; that is, “You have given us by your teaching a spring of living faith in the living God.” “Never man,” they said, “spake like this Man”; that is, with such compelling authority upon the conscience. Our Lord’s authority, then, was an authority to which the honest heart could not but respond; it was the authority of influence. May it always be so with our bishops. Along with the special commission which is given them to preach the Word of God they have many special opportunities. At con-

firmations of the young, at ordinations of clergy, on many occasions of local or national importance, words spoken by them fall into hearts newly ploughed up and ready for the seed. God grant it always an abundant harvest. God grant to them always to speak a word in the true spirit of divine authority, a word "living and powerful," so that it may find an entrance and spring up to life eternal.

But their commission lays upon our bishops not only "to teach and exhort with wholesome doctrine," but to "drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine *contrary to God's Word.*" For that side of their duty also they have the sanction of Christ's example. He preached His gospel to those who would receive it, but He also confronted the false teachers. And His appeal as against false doctrine was an appeal from the "traditions of men" to the "Word of God," the Word which He Himself spake and the Word already enshrined in Scripture. That appeal we inherit. To us in the English Church the test of truth is the Word of God in the

two Testaments. Now to any one not of the Christian family this appeal to the written Word of God must often seem almost pathetic in its simplicity. They remind us of the long and bitter quarrels which have divided Christendom as to the interpretation of the sacred text, the anathematisings, the burnings, and we acknowledge with grief all the shameful history. Nevertheless we maintain that from the first Christian age the Holy Spirit of Truth has been taking of the things of Christ in the Holy Book and showing us their meaning; and though the first breaking forth of the new light has often brought with it opposition and conflict, yet it has vindicated itself at last in the lives of those who accepted it, while it has not been without influence even upon those who at first opposed it and may still hold aloof. There is a *charisma veritatis certum*, a sure tradition of truth in the Church, which is clarified and purified from age to age; and if in this or that generation the truth may have to force its way into life through agony and passion

we cannot be surprised, for it is the truth "as it is in Jesus," and Jesus Himself, the truth incarnate, did not win His victory without the defeat of the Cross. But the truth is great, and it prevails. Of this truth, achieved through the centuries and stored in the Church's treasury, the bishops are the ordained guardians; it is theirs to see that our Church does not lose what has been won for us at such a cost;—our great threefold belief in God the Father who made us and all the world; in God the Son who redeemed us and all mankind; in God the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us and all the elect people of God; and not least is it theirs to secure for us that right of appeal from the traditions of men to Holy Scripture from which these truths were drawn, with which they must always in their elaboration be kept in touch, and by which all else that passes for truth must finally be tested. To that appeal to the written Word we address ourselves in these last days with more confidence perhaps than ever before, because our methods of inter-

pretation are surer. But if surer, they are also slower, more laborious and exacting, requiring more than ever the trained scholarship that can only come from the devotion of a life's service; so that the authority to *decide* whether any teaching is "contrary to God's Word" can only by a rare accident be joined in the future with the episcopal authority to "*drive it away*" when it is proved to be erroneous. Christ, says St. Paul, has given to His Church both pastors and doctors, and whatever was the exact distinction between the two teaching functions in the Apostolic Church, a very real distinction is necessarily establishing itself to-day.

(2) The second branch of a bishop's authority is that of government, the symbol of which is the shepherd's crook. It was the custom in old days to put this crook into the bishop's hand at consecration for an emblem of the commission to rule, as the Bible was laid on his neck for an emblem of the commission to teach. And it is a custom that might well be restored. No more wonderful sign of the

revival of the Spirit of Christ in our Church during recent years can be pointed to than the recovery of Christ's idea of episcopacy, the idea of the shepherd who feeds and guides and gives his life for the sheep. "The sheep know My voice, and they follow Me; a stranger will they not follow, for they know not the voice of strangers." Does not that familiar verse give us the very secret of episcopal government! A bishop must know his clergy, and his clergy must know him. The bond between them must be personal and human, not departmental. I knew a bishop once, a good man and a great scholar, whose first official act on coming to his diocese was to send round a circular letter enumerating the subjects upon which he did not desire his presbyters to correspond with him. It killed his influence for it killed sympathy, and all Christian authority is based upon sympathy. When sympathy is secured, authority is secure also; for from those whom men love and respect they will accept not only guidance, but correction; the rod as

well as the staff. We hear on many sides complaints of the slackening of discipline in the Church; clergymen, we are told, are forgetting their oaths of obedience to lawful authority and are following self-constituted and irresponsible leaders. It may be so, and if it is so it is a grievous fault. But may not some part of the fault lie in a misunderstanding on the part of some of our bishops as to what constitutes Christian discipline? I do not want now to go into the historical question of the relation of bishops to presbyters in the first centuries; it will suffice if we test the case for discipline on the highest ground, where its model is the discipleship of the Twelve to our Lord Jesus Christ. And if we ask what was the secret of that reverent and familiar companionship with its trustful open-heartedness and loyal affection, we shall find it in the depth of the humanity of the Divine Master and the response it evoked.

The Son of Man came to minister, and what He ministered was Himself. He gave

His life a ransom for many. And all true rulers in His Church must in like manner give themselves; and their success will, under God's blessing, be proportioned, first, to the whole-heartedness of their devotion, and, secondly, to the breadth and depth of the manhood which they have to give. For if the Chief Shepherd is the Son of Man, the qualities of a true bishop cannot but be the qualities of a true man, and these are they which are ascribed to our Lord in to-day's gospel—goodness, wisdom, courage. “The child waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was with Him.” First goodness. “The grace of God was with Him,” and grace, as we know, is God's answer to human faith. Human goodness then means the heart right with God, “the conscience as the noonday clear,” the desire lift upward, the life lived from day to day in communion with the Father, the simplicity of aim which devotes the whole force of the life to the spread of the divine kingdom. The theory which found the origin of the

episcopate in the need for financial control has not established itself; and to-day, as in the first age, it is not financial skill that is the first requisite for a bishop. "It is not meet," said the Apostle, "that we should forsake the Word of God and minister to tables. We will continue stedfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the Word."

And to manly goodness they must add manly wisdom. We speak less often of the wisdom of the Master than of His holiness; but if we turn over the Gospel pages with this thought in our mind, we are met with abundant evidence of it. And so He bade His Apostles to add the wisdom of the serpent to the simplicity of the dove. There is perhaps no greater tragedy in human life than great goodness called to high office without the wisdom necessary for its discharge. At this moment all our eyes are set upon such a one—called, as he believes, to a divine sovereignty, anointed to his function with the oil of sacramental grace, so that his words and deeds have, as he deems, a divine inspiration; full, as a man, of high

ideals and generous impulses, but without the wisdom to guide them to an issue. With the best meaning he has incurred the worst. And a bishop has no less need than an emperor of a wise and understanding heart. He also has to deal, not with abstract principles, but with men. He has to set tasks, and choose for them the best agents; he has to organise his work in the most efficient way; he has to reconcile divergent interests, to arbitrate in quarrels, to encourage the laity for their work of ministry so that the whole body may be built up. And in all these tasks, while simple sincerity and the love of God and man will save him from the snares of the devil, they will not of themselves constitute him a wise master-builder.

And a third necessary gift is manly courage, which is the spring of justice. Every leader of men must be bold to take his own line in many things, following his own conviction. He will take counsel with those best fitted to advise; but in the end he will accept his own responsibility and follow his own judg-

ment. This the diocese looks for in its bishop. He is their father in God. To him they would gladly state their difficulties and scruples, and to him they will be loyal if he will draw them with the cords of a man. And therefore courage is needed in our bishops, not, as in old days, to withstand the tyranny of kings or mobs, but to withstand the pressure of public opinion, of party organisations, of domestic flatterers, perhaps even of brother bishops who may seem to be striking at Christian liberty. The Church passes from time to time through periods of crisis, and crises bring panic, and panics are very cruel. It would be a sad day for the English Church if the English bishops ever made a practical surrender of their individual jurisdiction, and adopted the practice of issuing synodical decrees passed by a majority of votes. It should be a cause of thanksgiving that in none of the sharp crises through which the Church of England passed in the nineteenth century were there wanting, in this and that diocese, Episcopal charges

as courageous as they were wise; and the event has justified them.

Goodness, then, wisdom, courage, the high virtues of redeemed humanity, all working by love, and all sustained by communion with God,—these are the powers in the life which the servants of Jesus Christ—just because they are *His* servants—are called to minister to His flock. And it is because these qualities have shown themselves effective in the pastoral work of those who to-day are to be ordained bishops that we are met here to pray, in the spirit of faith, that they will be blessed to more abundant fruit in the government to which, in God's providence, they are now called. Brethren, I commend them to your prayers.

Of one¹ I could say much, did not a friendship of twenty years tie my tongue; for it was he to whom I owe it, if I have learned

“The least
That to the faithful herdsman's art belongs.”

¹ Dr. Diggle, consecrated Bishop of Carlisle.

And the picture in my mind of his work to come, as a chief shepherd, is pieced together of many pictures in the past of "binding up what was broken, and bringing back what had been driven away." The picture that fills a large place in his mind, I do not doubt, is that which he has drawn for us in his life of the great Bishop of Manchester—the bishop of all classes, and all parties, and all denominations, who "won all hearts by opening to them his own," and who counted nothing human alien to the cause of Jesus Christ. Of the other¹ I cannot speak from personal knowledge. You in Yorkshire know him well. He is going to labour in a great town, not without experience of the sorrow "barricadoed evermore within the walls of cities," and not without experience of the efficacy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to turn even that sorrow into joy.

"Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep with the blood of the eternal covenant,

¹ Dr. Pearson, consecrated Bishop of Burnley.

our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen."

II.

THE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

PREACHED ON THE FESTIVAL OF THE PATRON SAINT,
ST. PETER'S DAY, 1905.

“This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it. Help me now, O Lord; O Lord, send us now prosperity.”—PSALM cxviii. 24.

THIS Psalm, composed, as it is thought, for the consecration of the second Temple, is in many ways appropriate to the festival of a great church such as ours, which, though it has a long and troubled history behind it, yet stands, after all its vicissitudes, firmer and more majestic than ever; a witness, by the grace of God, to the glory of God. “Let them now that fear the Lord confess that His mercy endureth for ever. They thrust sore at me that I might fall, but the Lord was my help; the Lord is my strength and

my song, and is become my salvation. The Lord hath chastened and corrected me, but He hath not given me over unto death. Open me the gates of righteousness that I may go into them and give thanks unto the Lord." So the verses run, and we who know the history of this venerable church feel their application to ourselves. Even the verses that follow, about the stone rejected of the builders, which received so remarkable fulfilment in the history of the Christ Himself, find a fulfilment again and again in the history of every Church which is content to live by His spirit: "The stone which the builders refused is become the headstone in the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made."

It so happens that this festival of St. Peter has been a notable day in our history on this very account, for the election to greater honour of what had been cast out in contempt. It was on St. Peter's Day, or the day following, in the year 1560, that Queen

Elizabeth, having once more abolished the convent which her sister Mary had re-erected, brought back again the College of Dean and Prebendaries which her father had established here, and re-established it on a surer foundation. On that festival of the patron saint when the three survivors of the old Chapter—their names were Richard Alvey (Walton's "Father Alvie"), Master of the Temple, Alex. Nowell (afterwards Dean of St. Paul's), and Humphrey Perkins—met the new Dean and their new brethren, and received their new charter, they must have hailed it as a day that the Lord had made; they must have thanked God that their warfare was accomplished, that their reformed faith, purified by the fires of the late reign, had emerged triumphant, and that their beloved church, now beyond hope restored to them, was secure under the defence of the great Queen, not only from the grim wolf of Rome, but from Protestant protectors of the type of the Duke of Somerset, who had designed to pull down its walls to build his own palace. They kept

that festival, we may be sure, with free and full hearts. And then, exactly a century later, the St. Peter's festival of 1660 witnessed just such another restoration. In the octave of St. Peter, after seventeen long years of exile, during which the service of prayer and praise after the use of the Church of England had been exchanged, not this time for the ancient offices, but for Presbyterian and Independent lectures and homilies, the aged survivors of the old Chapter—Benjamin Laney, Peter Heylyn, and William Heywood—met to instal their new Dean, and to take their seats once more in the desolate and (as they must have thought) desecrated choir.

Looking back, then, brethren, and remembering only these two festivals—which are the two days in all our history that most definitely made us what we are—may we not take the Psalmist's words into our own lips, and say: "This is the day which the Lord hath made: we will rejoice and be glad in it"; and so go on to turn our thanksgiving into a prayer that God will still be gracious

to us, and continue the prosperity which, for His own good purposes, He thus once and again restored? "Help us now, O God: O God, send us now prosperity."

What may we rightly think of as the prosperity of such a church as this? The 122nd Psalm—which we sang in our service this afternoon—seemed to find it in "peace" and "plenteousness." Peace we have. From without at the present time no danger threatens us. The people of England—even those who look upon the Abbey less as a church than as a mausoleum of their kings and heroes—have no desire to secularise it. And within there is peace. There have been times in our history when the bickerings between Dean and Chapter, or between the Chapter and the School, or between Prebendaries and petty Canons, have given a scandalous interest to certain pages of our annals; but to-day such civil broils have ceased; within the whole college there prevails the unity of a household. Peace, then, we have, and may it long continue—"Pray

for the peace of Jerusalem." Plenteousness, on the other hand, we cannot pretend to. As I stand here I see in the choir a vacant Canon's stall—left empty of set purpose that its endowment may replenish the fund for the repair of the Abbey buildings. And even so we lack the means to do all that need demands.

But peace (which we have) and plenteousness (if we had it) do not in themselves constitute prosperity. What that lies in another Psalm may remind us—"Prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us." Our prosperity, as a college, must lie in each member of the same, in his vocation and ministry, contributing his share to the work which God has set before us; doing it in such peace and with such plenteousness as He elects to supply; but doing it, doing the proper work of this place. And what that work must, in the main, consist in those who look up to St. Peter as their patron Apostle have even less than other Christians an excuse for forgetting. Two places in the Gospels

narrate the commission to him, which is the charter of the Church, and their tenour is one and the same. In the one, the confession "Thou art the Christ" is followed by "I give unto thee the keys of the kingdom," and in the other, "Lovest thou Me" is followed by "Feed My sheep." Here, then, lies our double duty and our double privilege, the condition of our prosperity, to acknowledge, and love, and worship the King, and to feed His sheep.

I call it a double duty, and the danger which the history of our great church amply illustrates is that one half of this duty may be separated from the other half, and treated as if it were the whole. Then each suffers. Worship that leaves the understanding passive becomes superstition and is by-and-by cast aside; and sermons by themselves are but ineffectual means of grace. We cannot believe that the people of London would have allowed this Abbey church to be so ruthlessly pillaged by the courtiers of King Henry VIII. and King Edward VI. if the stately worship that

went on in it had carried any vital meaning to them; nor, again, would they have so eagerly welcomed back the Church service after the Commonwealth, if the Puritan logomachy had not dried up the spirit of worship altogether. I think, brethren, we may venture to say, without idle boasting, that the lesson of those two reactions has been taken to heart in this place; that while the service of praise and prayer has not ceased—nay, has called into activity a succession of noble musicians, Purcell, Blow, Croft, and others (their names are household words throughout the Empire), whose celestial music has borne up the wings of the spirit into the seventh heaven of adoration—there has not ceased either a succession of wise and learned teachers who in each age have striven, in the power of the Holy Ghost, to expound to their generation the way of God more perfectly.

The lesson, I say, has been learned; nevertheless, in each age it needs to be laid to heart. In each new age both worship and teaching must be such as to appeal to and

convince the mind of man as it is here and now—feeling, indeed, its kinship with the past, but eager also to live its own new life. In the matter of worship our own foundation is so definitely that of a Reformed church—the cleavage between the mediæval convent and the modern college is so clear—that we have not been tempted by the latter-day fallacy that all mediæval usages are still binding on us, provided they are English and not Roman. We are loyal, indeed, to our own venerable traditions, so far as they are living traditions and traditions of beauty and dignity; but we conceive of religious worship as too serious and sacred a thing to be approached in any temper of antiquarian diletantism. It is enough for us if the stranger within our gates, bred to love the sober ritual of the Church of England, finds himself at home in a house he can think of as his Father's, and finds that the solemnity of worship here helps to shape the aspirations of his mind and heart and lift them to God.

And then for teaching. In the matter of

teaching we inherit a great liberty, for which at this festival we should not omit to give thanks; because, if our own chronicler (Flete) is to be believed, it is to what happened here on a certain St. Peter's Day in Henry I.'s reign that that liberty is ultimately due. The story is that Gilbert, Bishop of London (for his learning styled "the universal"), who had been invited by the brethren here to take part in their festival service, "fired," in the chronicler's phrase, "by an ardour of rapacity," seized to his own purposes the offerings of the faithful at the altar, and drew down upon himself a Bull of Pope Innocent II. forbidding him or any of his successors to intrude within the Abbey walls. That exemption (whether so acquired, or in some other way) we still enjoy, and though more than one Bishop of London since has thrust sore at us, they have not succeeded in bringing the Abbey church within their episcopal jurisdiction. Now is that exemption, with the independence and notably the liberty of prophesying that results from it, a matter for

which we may legitimately thank God to-day as we cannot doubt thanks were given here on many festivals immediately succeeding the great deliverance? I think it is. Admitting that at the present time the Church of England as a whole requires more and not less discipline, it is, nevertheless, also for the good of the Church—especially at times of transition in modes of thought, which are often times of panic and so of persecution—that there should be one place at least free from episcopal control, where what seems the truth about matters of current religious controversy can be spoken without fear by accredited ministers. One wishes it could be said that this church of St. Peter had always risen to the height of its privilege in this matter. We cannot forget that when the new learning first came to these shores, it was not from this Abbey pulpit, but in St. Paul's Cathedral, that the true sense of the Greek Testament was first publicly taught. And while for so teaching it Dean Colet fell under the wrath of the Bishop of

London, and was for a time in danger of the stake for rejecting the traditional interpretation of the threefold commission to St. Peter, St. Peter's own abbot, Islip, who was exempt from the Bishop's jurisdiction, and could have said with impunity what Colet said at the risk of his life, had no word of encouragement at all for the new learning. No doubt he was doing good work in his own way; he was occupied in building the western towers of his Abbey church, and the beautiful chapel that was to receive his bones after a burial worthy of the richest mitred abbot in England—but he was not “feeding the flock.” Such opportunities do not recur every century. But when the next great burst of new learning came—brought to us by the natural sciences—in the mid-nineteenth century, we may be glad to acknowledge that it found no warmer welcome than within these walls.

But what about to-day? Well, brethren, the church of Westminster has an opportunity to-day second to none it has ever enjoyed, because the time calls for students.

Historical and critical study of the sacred Gospels is accumulating hypotheses which need sifting, and facts which need focussing into their proportion. While one great party in the Church is crying, "This is Catholic truth," and another party is crying, "This is Protestant truth," many God-fearing men are content to turn back to the Gospels, and to ask of the Lord Jesus Pilate's old question (though not in his spirit)—"What is truth?" And that is an appeal for a learned ministry—rightly dividing the Word of the Incarnate. The Dean and Canons of this church, when they are admitted to their office, take an oath to "prefer Scripture to tradition, and what is true to what is accepted" ("Deo teste promitto ac spondeo me . . . vera consuetis, scripta non scriptis, in religionis causa antehabitorum"); and that they do feel their oath to be binding upon them they have lately given evidence by the omission (on the authority of the Dean as Ordinary) of the damnatory clauses in their recital of the Athanasian Creed, because the verse in St.

Mark (xvi. 16) upon which those clauses were originally based is now known not to form part of the original Gospel. That is a protest in the name of truth which the independence of this church enables it to make; and that protest alone is no little justification of that independence. But the appeal to "Scripture" against "tradition," to what is "true" against what is "accepted," is necessary in many other directions. The party which appeals to "Catholic truth" tells us that the Church of England exceeded its powers as a local Church when it appealed to Scripture against mediæval doctrine; against, for example, the doctrine of Masses for the dead. There is still need, then, for our appeal to Scripture. On the other hand, there is need for protest when the other party, which accepts that appeal, lays it down or implies that the work of the Holy Spirit in guiding the Church into the interpretation of Scripture was finally completed at the Reformation, three centuries ago. The sympathies of our hearts are drawn sometimes to the one of

these famous parties, and sometimes to the other, and that is a sure indication that there is truth with both of them, and every attempt to elucidate and disentangle that truth will be one step nearer the final unity which both parties desire—a unity which can only be in the truth.

If, then, we accept our independence as a call to eschew party watchwords, and feed the flock with the doctrine which, whether it be called “Catholic” or “Protestant,” or neither, we believe to be the doctrine of Holy Scripture, and the truth as it is in Jesus, we may look to the Master with confidence for the prosperity which He only can bestow. “Help us now, O Lord; O Lord, send us now prosperity. Prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us.”

III.

THE SON OF MAN THE SON OF GOD.

PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN,
4TH JUNE, 1905.

“Now when Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”—MATTHEW xvi. 13-16.

THE appeal of the present day for confirmation of the faith is peculiarly an appeal to the original Gospels. Men are scrutinising them with the deepest interest, and asking what really did the Apostles think of their Master, and what really, in simple fact, did He think of Himself. They turn, for example, to this familiar passage in St. Matthew, which seems to lay down for all time the rule of faith in the belief that the Son of

Man was, and is, the Son of God, and they say, But what did the two terms really mean? What did Jesus mean by calling Himself Son of Man, and what did the disciples mean by calling Him Son of God? Were not both terms various titles for the Messiah, and does the one therefore add anything to the other? And what did the title of Messiah mean? Was not its meaning just what any one chose to make it? If I may use my privilege of preaching in this chapel to address the younger members of the College, I should like to ask whether you have met the severe trial to faith, whether in yourselves or others, of finding the very terms in which you have been wont to asseverate your belief themselves (as it were) dissolving, so that your confession seems not so much untrue, or unproven, as not to the point and not worth making. If so, may I beg your attention on this occasion in considering the famous confession of St. Peter, upon which our Lord Himself announced that His Church was founded,

rather to the use and implications in the Gospel story of the terms employed than to their merely formal significance. The title "Son of Man" was perhaps a Messianic title, adopted by our Lord as being broader in its scope, and also freer from popular associations, than the title Son of David; but it was certainly a title chosen by Himself, and therefore it may be possible to discover, from His own use of it, what His consciousness was of His divine mission. The other title, the "Son of God," was undoubtedly Messianic, and as it falls from the lips of the demoniac or the High Priest it may have no very precise connotation. But the question is at any rate worth asking, whether there are not signs that, for our Lord Himself and His apostles, it meant what the Church means by it to-day.

Consider first the title "Son of Man." "Who do men say that I the Son of Man am?" To the ordinary Jew the phrase "Son of Man," if it were not understood as a title of Messiah, would be no more than

an equivalent for "man," possibly with some emphasis on his weakness, as when it is used so many times of the prophet Ezekiel—"Son of man, stand upon thy feet and I will speak to thee"—or in the eighth Psalm, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that Thou visitest him." Accordingly, some critics have been bold to say that our Lord Himself meant no more by it than this; that, in fact, He employed the title as a protest against an exaggerated estimate of His person and claim. It is worth while, therefore, to inquire whether the recorded instances of its use will bear out this interpretation.

The first instance recorded is that in the house at Capernaum, where a man sick of the palsy, not being able to approach the Master through the crowd besieging the door, was let down by his friends through the roof. Jesus seeing their faith says to the sick man, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." But the Pharisees demur, saying, "Who can forgive sins but

God only"; and Jesus replies, "*The Son of Man* hath power on earth to forgive sins." Does that mean simply, "*Man* hath this power"? So far the argument would allow that interpretation. But the story proceeds: "That ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, He saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thy house." With this sequel the interpretation seems less certain. It was *man* who healed the body, as it was man who (presumably) had healed the soul; but not surely man as a mere member of the race. Could any man and every man have done both acts of healing? The Pharisees at least knew that they could have done neither. But this Man, the New Prophet, by doing the one miracle had at least made it credible that He had done the other. If we then had been present among the crowd, supposing we did not understand "Son of Man" to be a mere title of Messiah, we should have asked, "Who is this Son of Man?" He calls Himself "*Man*" *par excel-*

lence. Does He mean that all men ought to have the power He has displayed, and that He perchance can give them the power? If so He will be a fount of new life for the race, a second Adam. And if we had attached ourselves to His company, we might have found, as the apostles found, that from Him new powers were generated in us also, both to forgive sin and heal disease.

A second instance of the emphatic use of the title occurs in the story that immediately follows. The disciples are accused by the Pharisees of breaking the Sabbath by plucking ears of corn as they walk through the fields; and Jesus defends them in the famous saying, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; therefore the *Son of Man* is lord also of the Sabbath." Here again the argument certainly requires that "the Son of Man" shall, in some sense, mean "man." But as certainly it does not mean "any man" and "every man." For suppose a thief were to plead that the law of property being made for man, and not

man for the law of property, it followed that he was greater than the law and might break it. The parallel, which is an exact one, reminds us that man can be called "lord" of any institution made for his sake, only if he can stand at the point of view of the law-giver, and see that the institution has served its purpose and may be changed. And this holds true of the moral law also. And so the best commentary on this saying, that the Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath, is that series of solemn ordinances recorded in the Sermon on the Mount: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, *Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not commit adultery*; but *I* say unto you, *Thou shalt not be angry or lustful*"; and when you recall the preface, then as now, standing at the head of the two tables of commandments, "God spake these words and said," it becomes impossible to put such a construction on the humanity of Jesus as to exclude the consciousness of authority to revise the Divine law.

Or, once more, take that memorable occasion

when our Lord's "friends" said he was mad, and the scribes that he had an evil spirit.¹ Jesus said, according to the report in St. Matthew xii. 32 (which St. Luke assigns to a different occasion, xii. 10): "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him." Here there is an undeniable contrast drawn between the Son of Man and the Holy Spirit; but is the contrast simply that between man and God? Surely, if all that is meant is that it is a far more serious thing to blaspheme God than to defame a good man, the disciples would hardly have recorded the saying, for it would have expressed an obvious truism, so far as it was true at all. But understand in Jesus a consciousness of possessing the Divine Spirit, and the distinction becomes at once full of meaning and interest. For it exhibits our Lord as recognising that He might be opposed in His ministry from one cause and

¹ Mark iii. 21.

another, as by His friends who held Him to be mad, and the opposer be excusable, but to say that His good deeds were bad deeds, that His Spirit was the spirit of the great enemy of mankind, showed a corruptness of heart that was past cure.

Here, then, are three cases of the emphatic use of the title "Son of Man," which postulate, if their full value is to be given them, a recognition in Jesus of something far transcending the ordinary human consciousness. They imply the consciousness (1) of power to forgive sins; (2) of authority to revise a divinely given law; (3) of possessing the very spirit of God. And the more than human implications of the title become more emphatic as the Gospel story proceeds. We observe how under this title of "Son of Man," our Lord embraces all the teaching of the prophets as to the true humanity of the King who was to redeem Israel, as contrasted with the brutal tyrannies of the kingdoms of the world. The King that was to come was to be neither lion, nor bear, nor leopard, nor he-goat, but, as

Daniel foretold, a Son of Man;¹ one who would seek and save the lost;² one who would serve rather than be served.³ Yet the claim, again and again repeated, and most unequivocally when it could have but one result, was to nothing less than divine kingship. Henceforth ye shall see the "Son of Man" sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.⁴

Let us go on to consider that other title of "Son of God," which, at this critical moment of His ministry, our Lord accepted from St. Peter. I have already said that it was a recognised title of Messiah. To speak of the divine King as the divine "Son" was to follow the language of the Old Testament, especially of the Second Psalm, where it is said by God to the divinely appointed King upon the hill of Zion: "Thou art My *Son*, this day have I begotten thee." But our Lord's previous objection to this title, His adoption of the title "Son of Man" instead of it, and

¹ Daniel vii. 1-14.

² Luke xix. 10.

³ Mark x. 45.

⁴ Matthew xxvi. 64.

His acceptance of it at last from St. Peter, must have had some meaning, and the meaning is not far to seek. Just as when a stranger saluted Him as "good Master," He repudiated the epithet because it was given merely as a compliment, so He did not wish to be saluted as "Son of God," before men had weighed with a little more care what they meant by that expression. It will help us to realise how all meaning can be lost from a mere title, if we recall what has happened in the case of the heir to the throne. He is called "Prince of Wales," but what Englishman or Scotsman or Irishman ever thinks of the Principality when he speaks of the Prince. Similarly it was only too possible to use even so high a title as that of "Son of God," without thinking much, or perhaps at all, of the relation of the Son to the Father. But this relationship was the very soul of the Gospel. Christ came to men with a message from God, and that message was the revelation of God in Himself; so that it would be true to say that the whole Gospel

was contained in the old Messianic title, "Son of God," if only that title were deeply enough understood. If Jesus were "Son of God" in such a sense that "in Him was all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;"¹ if he were Son in such a sense that "He who had seen the Son had seen the Father also"²—then, to come to Jesus was to come to God; to love and obey Jesus was to love and obey God; to worship Jesus was to worship God; to understand the mind of Jesus was to understand the mind of God; to receive the Spirit of Jesus was to receive the Spirit of God. And this was the belief that grew up slowly in the hearts of the disciples as they listened to His teaching, and this was the meaning of the confession that found utterance through St. Peter's lips: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (where the introduction of the epithet "living" throws the terms apart, and allows each its full value); a confession which St. John long afterwards expressed in terms which, to us of the West, convey their sense

¹ Col. ii. 9.² John xiv. 9.

with less risk of misunderstanding: "We behold His glory, the glory as in an only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth."

We get light on the implications of this Confession from the reply it at once drew from our Lord. "On this rock (of your confessed faith in me) I will build My church." The word "church" has a modern sound, and may seem simply to look forward to Christian times. But if the word be rendered "congregation," we are reminded that it has a long history; that it looks back to many familiar Scriptures: "O sing unto the Lord a new song, let the congregation of saints praise Him; let Israel rejoice in Him that made him, and let the children of Zion be joyful in their King." "Think upon thy congregation, whom Thou hast purchased and redeemed of old";—that Jesus is, in fact, declaring His intention of founding a new congregation of the faithful like the old, a new Israel to take the place of the old; that He is re-announcing the old Divine promise, and re-inaugurating the old Divine covenant; that, in fact, the claim

to build a kingdom against which the powers of death shall not prevail is nothing short of a Divine claim.

The ideas associated with the title of the "Son of God" in the Gospels are those of power and authority, which are shown to be dependent upon the perfect communion of will between the Divine Son and the Heavenly Father, the vicegerent and the Creator. The idea of *power* is most clearly emphasised in the stories of the Temptation, which represent the spirit of evil as making his attack upon our Lord's consciousness of possessing Divine power as Son of God. If thou be the Son of God make bread of stones, defy the laws of the universe—temptations which would have no meaning except to a mind conscious of authority to draw upon the power by which the world subsists. But if the first thing to strike the people was Christ's power over men's souls and bodies, no less striking was the *authority* with which He declared God's will to men. For the most part our Lord contented Himself with this

authoritative teaching without laying stress on His credentials, but occasionally we do come upon a very emphatic assertion of His claim as the Divine Son to know the mind of the Father. Such is the famous verse in St. Matthew xi. 27: "All things have been delivered unto Me of My Father; and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And perhaps an even sharper edge is given to this assertion of intimate communion by that verse in St. Mark xiii. 32: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father"—a verse which puts the Son into particular relation with the Father, apart from men and angels, and by the very fact that it denies the Son knowledge on certain points brings itself into relation with many parallels, and attests its own authenticity.

Now, extraordinary as it must seem to any careful student of the Gospels, it is sometimes said that Jesus made no claim for Himself as Son of God which He did not also make for the rest of mankind. He declared, it is said, that all men equally are God's children ; and, for evidence, it is pointed out that the prayer taught to the disciples prescribed the address to God as "Father." Now the Gospels make it plain that our Lord's teaching was that all men might come to God *through Him*. St. John's "I am the Way" answers to St. Matthew's "Come unto Me," and the history of Christianity answers to this claim. If we ourselves would claim an equal sonship, we must put in evidence words of authority and works of power like to His. If we cannot, where is the reasonableness of ignoring in theory the radical difference between that original sonship and ours, which, so far as we in fact possess it, is derived from His? Why, instead of making so perverse a claim to equality with the only begotten Son, should

men not claim what may be theirs—acceptance in Him. “To as many as received Him to them gave He power to become the Sons of God, even to those *who believe on His name.*” The Church stands upon the rock of faith in God through Jesus Christ. Without that faith we can neither know God’s will, nor speak His words, nor work His works. “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” Shall we still be debating whether He was but a son of God like ourselves, or, as St. Peter confessed, “*the* Son of the living God?”

IV.

IMMORTALITY.

PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, NOVEMBER 2, 1902,
AND, IN SUBSTANCE, BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY OF CAM-
BRIDGE, AND IN BALLIOL COLLEGE CHAPEL.

“Our commonwealth is in heaven.”—PHILIPPIANS
iii. 20.

IN our older English calendar to-day would have been marked as All Souls' Day. At the Reformation the name was struck out. It is not difficult to understand the reason that led our reformers to make the excision. The great constraining reason, undoubtedly, was that the celebration of All Souls' Day was inextricably intertwined with the Romish doctrine of purgatory which had to be got rid of at all costs. But I do not know that the reformers intended to deprive us of that greatest and most profitable of all Christian commemorations, except the very greatest of all; I mean the re-

membrance before God of the faithful who have passed away from earth—the commemoration of all the Christian souls who were once the light of our lives—our parents, our brothers and sisters, our children, our friends. We cannot forget them, Protestants though we be, and we would not forget them if we could; their names come unbidden into our prayers. And what makes me sure that Cranmer only intended to provide a more wholesome opportunity for such commemoration is that while with one hand he took away from us our old day of the dead, with the other he attempted to broaden the idea of the Feast of All Saints, by making it a general commemoration of all the faithful departed. He preserved the old Epistle that spoke of Christ's saints as a multitude which no man can number; he preserved the old Gospel which set out the qualities of saintship in Christ's own beatitudes, which are the pattern of every Christian, and then he wrote a new collect, substituting for the prayer for grace through the multiplied intercessions of certain

canonised and accredited saints, the apostolic recognition of the saintship of all believers in the mystical body of Christ, concluding with a prayer for grace that we might follow all that was good in their example.

The change had all Cranmer's boldness in matters of theory. Its defect was that it did not recognise clearly enough the fact that there are degrees in the imitation of Christ, that there are in the Christian world not only those who have made, as we have all made, the general surrender of our wills to Christ, but also men whose devotion to Christ reaches heroism, and who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." The old distinction between the commemoration of All Saints and the commemoration of All Souls does answer to facts, and its recognition is a need of human nature; but it is as well that we should keep the latter commemoration, which falls to-day, as an incident of the greater. And, therefore, this afternoon I would invite your attention to the great fact which underlies both commemorations—the fact that we are citizens of

a great commonwealth whose chief and most populous province is not here, but in heaven, and whose King is in heaven, ruling this lower kingdom from the unseen world, and summoning us at death to His nearer presence. Now, we who hold this Christian faith in a life to come have sometimes to meet severe criticisms from those of our brethren and companions who do not; and some of these I propose to ask you to consider.

(1) First of all, we have sometimes to meet a charge of selfishness in looking forward to a future life, and this charge comes most frequently in the shape of a criticism of the supposed nature of the life in heaven to which we look forward. Our critics quote to us the well-known words out of St. Bernard's hymn:—

“I know not, oh, I know not,
What social joys are there,”

and they say to us, “I see; what you want is a life of unending happiness; of course, your desire is very natural. We all want more happiness. But what has that to do

with religion? The object of religion is not to make men happy, but to make them good. Surely," they say to us, "the most religious men in the world's history have been men of sorrows, to whom social joys were unknown and uncared for—men entirely devoted to the pursuit of truth or the pursuit of goodness, with no sort of care for any mere domestic felicity." "We understand," they say to us, "the Mohammedan paradise; that is entirely appropriate to the Mohammedan religion. But Christianity—at least the Christianity of the Gospels—seems to us a religion of self-denial and not of everlasting enjoyment."

Well, that charge is made, and what shall we say to it? Does it make us ashamed of looking forward to "Jerusalem the Golden"? At any rate, we can begin by making an obvious distinction. We shall not deny that we look forward to happiness in heaven, but we must point out that the happiness to which we look forward is not the same thing as pleasure; that the joys we imagine

in heaven are not pleasures of sense. Our collect for All Saints' Day, following the Bible, is careful to refer to such joys as "unspeakable"; that is to say, the heart of man has not conceived them and cannot conceive them. But, if among those unspeakable joys in God's presence, we define one in particular, the joys of society, the bliss of reunion with those blessed spirits whom we have loved on earth, ought that to shame us? Is there antagonism between religion and human love, between the affection that knits men into households and the affection that knits men to God? Are we better men and better women when we love, or when we hate and envy? There is no doubt about the answer. We must all feel the sterling sense in that great saying of the apostle, "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And, if we love our brother, must we not desire communion with him?

And then for the very broad statement that the great saints have always been un-

happy, and have set their thoughts on higher things than human love. There is, of course, a certain obvious truth in the statement. The world has persecuted many of its prophets and righteous men. But their endurance of persecution or of martyrdom was but one example of the common law of life that a lesser good must be sacrificed for a greater, if the two cannot be held together. Not only every soldier of the cross, but every soldier of the king, knows what that surrender means:—

“I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more.”

Christ certainly said, “He who loveth father or mother or wife or child more than Me is not worthy of Me”; and He Himself for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame. But it was for the joy set before Him; the joy of bringing many sons to the glory of the Divine likeness. To the happiness of human friendship He was not indifferent. He knew the social joys of Bethany, and loved a certain disciple who lay upon His breast at supper, and no one,

I think, would accuse Jesus Christ of selfishness. And so our answer to the charge of selfishness in looking forward to the great reunion of heaven is, in one word, this—that to be good it is not necessary to be unhappy, and that to love God it is not necessary to be bereaved.

(2) And then, secondly, it is said to us by other critics, “We have no fault to find with you for so excellent a hope as the hope of immortality. It certainly is not selfish. We only wish that we ourselves could entertain it. At the same time would it not be the more manly course to face the evidence of facts, and recognise that the difficulties involved in the idea of immortality—the scientific difficulties, especially the difficulties involved in what we now understand to be man’s place in the universe, are insuperable. Can it be good for intelligent men to subsist upon opiates?”

This protest has been made in an especially eloquent way in a recent memoir¹ of our great

¹ By Sir Alfred Lyall.

Victorian poet, Tennyson. Tennyson, as we all know, held fast to the belief in immortality, and regarded the continuance of that belief as the one hope of progress in the human race, and for so doing he has been taken to task as though in a good cause he wilfully shut his eyes to facts of which he was certainly aware. It is quite true that Tennyson was aware of the scientific facts of his day. He was fully alive to the significance of the incredible vastness both in time and space of this material universe, and the consequent and inevitable dwindling that has resulted in the material importance of the human race. In poem after poem Tennyson has dwelt upon this, because, to his imagination, these revelations of science were indeed revelations, and not, as they are to most of us, mere facts that we read about one day, and the next day forget. They haunted his imagination.

“What are men, that He should heed us? cried the
king of sacred song,
Insects of an hour, that hourly work their brother-
insect wrong.

While the silent heavens roll, and suns along their
fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them, flash a million
miles a day.
Many an æon moulded earth before her highest,
man, was born,
Many an æon too may pass when earth is manless
and forlorn."

These lines show us that Tennyson fully realised the material insignificance of man; "a minim jot in time and space." But in refusing to be crushed by it, he was behaving like other great thinkers before him. It is well to remember that the material insignificance of man is no new discovery. It is, in fact, a discovery that each age in which natural science flourishes must make in a new form for itself. The vastness of space and the meanness of mankind were every whit as appalling to the early astronomical science of the writer of the Eighth Psalm as they are to us. They were every whit as appalling to Pascal in the days of the new discoveries of Galileo and Kepler. But each of these thinkers had made the same answer, and we make it to-day. "When I consider the heavens," says the

Psalmist, "the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, I say, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him." But at once he goes on to point out that notwithstanding this material insignificance, man by his mind and will proves himself not only master of the material world, but only a little lower than God. And so Pascal: "Not from space must I seek my dignity, but from the ruling of my thought. By space the universe encompasses and swallows me as an atom. By thought I encompass the universe. Man is but a reed, weakest in nature, but a reed which thinks. It needs not that the whole universe should arm to crush him. A vapour, a drop of water is enough to kill him. But were the universe to crush him man would still be more noble than that which had slain him, because he knows that he dies, and that the universe has the better of him; the universe knows nothing of this."

There is and there must always be the

answer of man to the fact, always being newly emphasised by natural science, of his material insignificance, which is a fact beyond dispute; but the greatness of man, as a being capable of thought, and will, and love, is a fact also. And so we Christians, who believe in man's immortality, are not ignoring facts. We are insisting upon them. We say that man because he can say, I am I, because he can think and act and love, is in the universe only less than God. He is the child of God, and so the heir of immortality.

(3) But a third sort of criticism is levelled against our belief in eternal life. This belief, it is said, may be true or it may not, but for our life here, at any rate, it is beside the mark. To lay emphasis upon it is to distract us from our true business, which is, to order our life here. And these critics sometimes add that even the Christian religion, properly understood, the religion of the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul, is only a high morality concerned with life here. That final statement we may make bold to

deny at once. Take any of the passages in the Gospels, or Epistles, which deal with the ordinary duties of everyday life. You will observe how, in every case, the motive is drawn from the supernatural world. "Children, obey your parents *in the Lord*." "Servants, be obedient to your masters *as unto Christ*." "And ye, masters, do the same things to them; knowing that both their master and yours is in heaven." St. Paul insists upon the life after death as the main-spring of the simplest duties of ordinary life. "Your Master is in heaven watching you, caring how you behave, one day to exact an account." You cannot, therefore, expect a Christian man, with his Bible before him, to limit his interest to the present world when it is from the world to come that he draws the inspiration of his life. His King and his commonwealth are in heaven. And though we who are here to-day might find it hard to say with St. Peter that in this world we feel ourselves to be but strangers and pilgrims, yet it would not be too much to say—it

would be simply true to say—that all that makes us what we are at our best, the power that gives us strength in the fight against evil desire, comes to us from that other country where Christ is.

As to the charge of what has been called “other-worldliness,” I must confess that I have never met with that distemper amongst Christians. From my own observation, I should say that Christian men were every bit as good citizens as those who theoretically limited their interest to this world—as genuine lovers of their race. One might perhaps even dare to go further, and say that the men who have done most to make this world a better place than they found it—men like the great Lord Shaftesbury—have been the very men who looked forward to another country, and declared plainly that this was not their home. But if there be other-worldliness among Christians—an interest in heaven so great as to blot out all interest in earth, such a temper is anti-Christian. That solemn fifteenth chapter of

the Second Letter to the Corinthians, which is a pæan of joy in the fact of eternal life, concludes with a sharp call to work our work here simply because such work is eternal: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

(4) Finally, in order to remind ourselves that this is no abstract piece of speculation, but the article of a standing or falling church, let us remind ourselves how differently we look at men according as we regard them as immortal spirits or as merely the paragon among animals, more curiously contrived and cleverer than others, but with a like origin and with a like end awaiting them. Which doctrine are we to hold? Which doctrine seems to us best to fit the facts of life, to explain men and women as we know them?

I pass by the great saints. I ask you to think of the souls of the righteous whom you yourselves have known intimately, those whom to-day each of you is remembering

before God. Your mother, was it from a mere quintessence of dust that there came into your life all that has made you not ashamed of it? You know too well the promptings of the flesh to confuse this with those. And think of the beautiful old age of good men and good women. Why is it that we can bear the decay of their physical and mental powers? It can only be because we recognise that there is something in them which is not of the body and not subject to decay. There is a sentence on this subject of old age written by a great writer who was not a Christian, that often comes into my own mind, and as it points the contrast very plainly, I will read it. It is from George Eliot: "I hardly ever look at a bent old man or a wizened old woman but I see also with my mind's eye that past of which they are the shrunken remnant, the drama of hope and love which has long ago reached its catastrophe, and left the poor soul, like a dim and dusty stage, with all its sweet garden scenes and fair perspectives overturned and thrust out of

sight." Each ordinary human life, that is to say, which lives to its natural close, is a tragedy. Does not that judgment of itself suggest that something is wrong in the un-Christian view? In our own experience, is old age always a catastrophe? God forbid. To see the brow wrinkled, the cheeks fallen, that were once the pride of your heart, is a loss not to be gainsaid; to note the weakening of power, in will or in wisdom, in those who have been to ourselves the guides of life and the inspiration of our achievement—is a loss far sadder, not to be gainsaid. But that is not the failure of the life; that is not catastrophe, any more than the withering of a leaf or the falling of a blossom is catastrophe and failure. The only failure in human life is fruitlessness; a starved spirit, a character on which the sun and showers of Almighty God have all spent themselves in vain.

Let me say in conclusion that the way to realise the meaning of immortality is not to think of it as an abstract doctrine that can

be argued about, and the *pros* put against the *cons*. The way to think of it is to think of Christ as living, as our King in that province of heaven, which seems so far off and is so very near; and then to think of those members of His blessed company whom we ourselves have known here and loved, and to keep their memories fresh in our prayers. That is the best answer to the doubt that will sometimes rise up and darken our brains :

“What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our
own corpse-coffins at last,
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in
the deeps of a meaningless Past?
What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a
moment's anger of bees in their hive?

.
Peace, let it be ! for I loved him, and love him for
ever : the dead are not dead, but alive.”

V.

THE GOLDEN CITY.

PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY BEFORE THE MAYOR AND CORPORATION OF WESTMINSTER, ON BEHALF OF THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL, ADVENT SUNDAY, 1904.

“And the nations shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory into it; and they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it; and there shall no wise enter it anything that defileth, neither he that worketh abomination or maketh a lie.”—REVELATION xxi. 24.

SUCH is the picture which St. John sees in a vision of the Church of Christ, as a missionary to the nations. The Church is glorious, shining in the world like a city built of translucent gold, through which there flashes the glory of God; and all the kings and peoples of the world are attracted by its beauty, and say, “Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.” The imagery of the golden city, with its

foundations of precious stones and gates of pearl, is Oriental, and not perhaps very attractive to us of the West; but what St. John symbolised by it we are at no loss to understand. By the beauty of the city he intends the beauty of Christian civilisation—laws, customs, art, science, commerce, the public and private life of citizens, all informed by the Divine Spirit. This light of goodness, of righteousness and mercy, shining out before men, will draw them to bring all that they have, and all that they are, so far as it is good, as an offering to God in Christ. They shall bring their glory and honour into the city of God.

Now, what is this glory that the heathen world can be said to have and bring into the glorious city? Is there in them also a manifestation of the Divine presence?

Well, quite plainly the attractive force of Christianity necessarily depends on there being that in the nations of the world to which this divine glory of Christianity can appeal; something like-minded, in rudimentary stages

and mixed with ignoble elements no doubt, but still not so alien as to be beyond the constraining and uplifting power of sympathy. This it is which enables them to *respond* to the call of the Church, as seeing therein the perfection of what they themselves possess only in part. And not only so, but in this and that nation some activity of the Divine wisdom has borne such excellent fruit, that the city of God would be conspicuously poorer if it were not brought within its territory.

Let me recall to your minds—and on Advent Sunday the subject is especially appropriate—a few of these glorious and honourable things which were as matter of fact brought by the peoples into the Church of Christ, when the Church was first set up as an ensign to the nations.

(1) One was natural science—the conception of the world as a universe controlled by law. The Jews, as we know, cared little for the study of the world; but the civilised nations of the West had gradually won their way, through divine leading, out of the blind

terrors of magic to a conception of nature as a single ordered process. They noted the fact that at all times and in every place like causes produce like effects; and they were continually searching for some great first cause of the phenomena of life, some ultimate principle which should explain everything. They had, in fact, attained to the notion of a reign of law as clear as we have now in these very last days, although they arrived at it, not step by step, but by happy guesses and broad generalisations. Many of my hearers will be familiar with that wonderful poem of Lucretius, so sympathetic to our modern scientific ideas, in which the civilised world is seen building itself up before our eyes, stage after stage, out of the first primordial clashing of atoms in the void, by the potency of the spirit of life in Nature. And it is interesting to remember, that although he attacked the religion of his age, yet by fixing the thoughts of his time on the single will which flows through all things, Lucretius is writing in the interests of religion. He

is filled with a passion to free men's hearts from superstition, especially from all the base imaginations that "lawless and uncertain thoughts" had accumulated about what lies beyond death. He appeals to his fellows to follow the light of truth, "clearer than the beams of the sun or the shining shafts of day"; he implores them not to give in to fables, but to keep a noble will and high courage in the face of the world and death, since neither can be the work of an enemy. As we read his poem, we want to whisper in his ear the Christian Gospel as St. John stated it—the doctrine of the Word of God, in whom was life, and who was both the end and the beginning—a gospel which by adding the note of purpose to the single stream of life that the poet saw gave it a meaning, and gave our lives a meaning also. He died without seeing the whole truth; but when the Church of Christ was set up, then this glorious conception of a universe ordered by law was one of the noblest things that the Western world brought into it.

(2) Or take again the idea of duty. The reflective mind of Greece set itself to ponder upon the wonderful power that the human mind possesses of setting before itself an ideal to be striven after; it brought into full consciousness the fact that men at their best do habitually pursue some end, which they conceive to be good for them, and which is quite another thing from pleasure; and it drew out into clear light what this “good” which men pursue really consists in—that the true satisfaction of our human nature is a satisfaction in well-doing, displaying itself now as temperance, now as fortitude, now as justice. And this fact, when once clearly perceived, made the ideal of “being good” and “doing good”—what we call in one word “duty”—much more efficacious upon men’s minds: it became indeed a lamp to their feet and a light to their path; and some of the greater spirits were bold enough to take the further step of arguing from these virtues which they found in mankind, however waveringly pur-

sued, upward to their perfect form as they must be supposed to exist in the Creator God. How would not Plato have rejoiced if he could have seen his hazardous argument confirmed by the sight of the very glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ! He died without seeing it. But when the Church of Christ was set up, then the clear vision which the Greeks had attained to of what "duty" consists in—the various virtues in which it finds its being in civilised society, and their clear doctrine of the absolute supremacy of motive, as that which gives all actions their quality—this was a gift for which the Christian Church must still acknowledge its debt. Whenever we speak or think to-day of what constitutes the Christian life, we use the moral categories of the Greeks.

If we pass from the men of theory to the men of action, from Greece to Rome, we see there the virtuous character at work, doing its mighty deeds of justice, self-denial, fortitude, which still stir the admiration of men.

Yes, and most interesting it is to notice in the Gospel narrative how the glory of this dutiful character called out the admiration of Christ Himself. With the Gospel before us, we cannot deny or forget that the humble faith of the Roman soldier, the man of disciplined obedience, was welcomed by our Master as that which should find its true place in the Kingdom of God. This *solid virtue* was no small part of the glory and honour that Rome was to bring into the Church of Christ, which finds its true ideal in the Son of Man. And not only did the Church gain from Rome this pattern of disciplined obedience, but it gained also — what is the other side of obedience — the power to govern and make laws, which stood it in good stead when the barbarous peoples passed under its yoke.

(3) And less gifted nations brought gifts less unique, but all brought some gift. All brought the glory of those human affections — the love of parents, of brethren, of friends, the sympathy with sorrow and suffering, which

at first in the contracted bond of the family, and gradually in wider circles, inspired acts of charity and goodwill, which were in harmony with the great law of universal love that Christ was to proclaim. Not the least testimony to the truth of Christianity is the witness of what an early apologist called "the soul naturally Christian"—the spark of divine humanity, the gleam of glory, in the loving heart.

Now, if we remember that these gifts with which various nations were endowed were all gifts of God, we shall understand how they necessarily found their true home in the Church of Christ. And if we remember also how partial they were, how at best limited in scope, how too often ineffective owing to other influences, and so in their issue neither glorious nor honourable—we shall understand also the great need there was of their coming back for rekindling to the great source of light. And those recollections will clear our thoughts as to the missionary duties of the Church to-day. The missionary idea of a

generation ago was that the whole non-Christian world lay in gross darkness, and such an idea was a great stimulus to Christian zeal, but it was often a zeal not according to knowledge. To-day it is not uncommon to meet, even among Christian men, the precisely opposite idea—viz., that non-Christian nations, being in God's hands, have already the sort of religion that is best for them. You hear it argued that Christianity is all very well for the most highly civilised nations, but that Mohammedanism suits better the common type of Oriental; that the subtle Hindoo has a subtle faith, the practical Chinese a practical faith, while the Japanese seem to be doing better without a religion than most other nations with one.

I suppose we are all familiar with that sort of criticism of Christian missions. It is not very deep, but it has the air of philosophy, and it serves its purpose of quieting conscience. The great Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, whose work you are this morning asked to help with your alms, de-

serves, as I venture to think, your earnest goodwill, because it keeps the mean between these two false extremes, and takes the view of missionary work that the Church inherits from the first ages and the sacred Scriptures. That is to say, it recognises, on the one hand, humbly and thankfully, what good there may be in the various faiths of the world, what truth about God, what devotion to duty, what love for men. It approaches them in the spirit of St. Paul, recognising with joy what there is of common ground between them and Christ's religion, before it proceeds in its endeavour to lead them to fuller light. At the same time it apprehends its mission to lie in thus leading them, as it can, from that common ground upward and onward. It refuses to acknowledge any necessarily lower level in the spirit of this or that nation, so that special religions should be appropriate to special regions; it recognises in all men "the soul naturally Christian," and by so doing it achieves results which justify its ventures of faith. It can point

to-day, as in the first age, to martyrs and confessors wrought by the spirit of Christ out of the unlikeliest material. And it seeks no less to consecrate the noblest material. It claims the subtlety of the Hindoo, as of the Greek; it claims the patriotism of the Japanese, as of the Roman; as being noble instances of that glory and honour of God-created humanity, which can only reach their fulness of fruition by finding their supreme object in the Kingdom of Christ and of God.

What are the chief hindrances at the present time to the attractiveness of the Christian Gospel?

(1) One obvious hindrance lies in the divisions of Christendom. It is a less hindrance than one might fear in the mission field abroad; because the field is so wide and also because the fire of Christianity which is strong enough to drive a man from home and kindred is usually strong enough to destroy the petty feelings of party strife which at home are apt to spring up unchecked. But still division is a hindrance even there; it pre-

vents that wise generalship, that hearty and loyal co-operation, that division of labour, upon which the success of any campaign must depend, and also it diverts strength and energy that can ill be spared from the great cause into unworthy channels. But conceive the effect our divisions must have upon an educated heathen who comes to our own land. Could we be surprised if he asked us where was the Golden City, built four square upon its adamantine foundations, into which he was to be enrolled a citizen? Could we blame him if he bade us first be reconciled to our own brother before we proceeded to reconcile him? The mission field, it has been well said, is the confessional of the Church. Let us confess, then, in all contrition our sad incapacitating quarrels.

(2) But then, secondly, in the act of contrition we cannot but remember that some divisions—not all, but certainly some—arise from the love of truth, which prevents our agreement with other of our Christian brethren against our conscience. Peace, we

say, is good, but before peace must come righteousness and the clear conscience. In certain continental countries we seem to see a great organised Christian body maintaining its unity by suppressing freedom of thought, and so alienating the intelligent part of the nation at home, and consequently incapacitating itself for permanent work among intelligent heathens. For them we are not responsible; but the spectacle must convince us that any effective unity can only come, not from suppressing differences, but from reconciling them in fuller knowledge; each dissentient party being ready to surrender what cannot be squared with the divine rule of truth as we by study are able to apprehend it. It might be some step in this direction, if our ecclesiastical party newspapers, which sway the passions of churchmen, could be each under the control, not of irresponsible individuals, but of a committee of scholars.

(3) But, again, there is another and a deeper hindrance to Christian missions than our divisions or our disputes, and that is the too

often inadequate degree in which our faith transfigures our individual lives and our civilisation. Might not our proposed convert say to us in London: "This City of Gold, to which you bid me, where should I look for it if not in the capital of your Christian empire? But where is the glory of God in London?" Well, brethren, I trust we could find an answer. We could point to our administration of justice, and ask whether that does not display God's glory of righteousness, if it is not as pure as the goodwill of human infirmity can make it? From the highest court to the lowest bribery is a thing unknown. Or we could point to our hospitals and ask whether our care for the sick was not showing forth God's glory of mercy? But if we were asked about what we profess to be the very test of discipleship, the care of all for each, the friendly service, the mutual helpfulness, the sharing of gifts, especially the great gifts of life and power, and all we could point to was the isolated ghettos of our modern industrial cities, our proselyte might fairly reply that he preferred the

patriarchal system of his own backward community, with its occasional failing in justice, but with its living interest and neighbourliness, to the Christian charity, lavish as it is, that the West dispenses to the East. I suppose our answer to this challenge would be that the problem of Christianising industry is really a new one. Courts of justice, hospitals, and so forth, have a long history behind them, and we can trace their gradual purging by the Christian spirit ; but industry is barely a century old, and the problem has grown in a generation to vast proportions. There it is, brethren, for you to solve. In one word it is this—to see how those who dwell in these great cities of the poor may preserve and fulfil their manhood ; how London under modern conditions may become a city of God.

When that day comes there will be no need to send out any more missionaries, for our city which indeed stands on a great hill, for all the world to see, can never be hid, and if the glory of God did but lighten it, nations would come to its light.

VI.

THE HOPE OF CREATION.

PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, NOVEMBER 20, 1904.

“The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of God’s children.”—ROM. viii. 20.

IN this wonderful passage of his letter to the Roman Church, St. Paul has been casting his eyes over the whole universe from its first moment of being and has seen upon it all two unmistakable marks. The first is the mark of vanity, that is to say, imperfection, transitoriness, decay, aspirations thwarted, efforts ineffective, time and chance apparently the lords of life. He has seen what the wise man saw and reported in that sad book of Ecclesiastes, which we read on this last Sunday morning in the Christian year:

“Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.”

“‘Passing away,’ saith the world, ‘passing away.’”

But he has seen also another mark on the face of things, equally all-pervading and unmistakable and characteristic—the mark of hope. The world from its creation has been tossed with all kinds of trouble, but it endures, buoyed up by hope. It never despairs. It goes on, despite pain, death, defeat, disappointment, “still nursing an indomitable hope.” It must be, says St. Paul, that the same hand who impressed the one impressed the other. The creation was indeed *made* subject to vanity, but subjected in hope; and if that is so, the pains of the world are pains of labour, travail pangs, with a birth to be looked for as their goal, and what birth that is you know from the creation promise: “Let us make man in our image.” The goal of creation is the appearance on the earth of “children of God.”

Let us look for a few moments at this

vanity and this *hope* of the creation; and take it first on its lower stages.

At a moment like this, when the solar year has well-nigh run its course and the whole vegetable world is hasting to decay, we can realise at a glance what St. Paul means by “vanity” so far as this lower order of creation is concerned. The trees were lovely in their first spring freshness, even in London, and that passed into the sober dignity of summer, and then, in country places, into the gold and scarlet of autumn, and then the fall. From the first it was a process of change; every beauty was transitory, much was imperfect, not fulfilling its early promise, and it has all ended in decay. “‘Vanity of vanities,’ saith the Preacher, ‘all is vanity.’” Yes, St. Paul would echo, “all is vanity”; but, for all that, all is hope. The trees are growing. If there is growth there must be change. If you paint a picture of a tree it will last more or less as you painted it, but if the tree is living it cannot remain in one stay; just because it is alive it is ever

pressing forward to the perfection of its full growth. Even the fall of the leaf must not be looked at as a fact by itself, but as a necessary stage in the tree's life. The leaves have done their work; but even their decay is hopeful. They fall around the tree and nourish the tree's life, and help to beget the new race of the new year.

And what is the purpose of all this vegetable life? what is the *hope* (if we may use the term of insentient things) that transforms all that vanity of dissolution into sacrifice? The dim life of the trees and grasses looks out beyond itself to some higher life for the sake of which it exists, to which it ministers—a life higher because conscious—the life of the animals. The moment which fulfils the life and the purpose of the tree is the moment when it stretches out its arms laden with fruit after its kind for the beasts of the field and the birds that sing in the branches.

So we mount a stage. And here on this higher level of animal life St. Paul would point out to us the same two marks—vanity

and hope; but the vanity is deeper and more terrible, because it is the vanity of sentient life, and that brings *pain* with it. And what here is the hope? I pass by what, after all, we cannot appreciate, the aspirations of the animals for their own kind, their jealousies, their wars, merely asking you to remember, what we are taught, that out of these struggles has come the fitness of each to pursue his own life—the swiftness of the hare, the subtlety of the fox, the strength of the lion—each has in this way plucked hope out of his pain. But leaving this, I would remind you that just as the vegetable world found its true life and reason for living, not in itself but in the creatures who live upon its fruits or seek its shade, so the animal world also looks up beyond itself for its meaning and purpose to the world of man. For us they exist; they are our slaves, or our companions, or our food; we test on them our new theories in medicine and surgery. For our sakes they endure pain. Their *hope* is in us.

Now, brethren, this is a fact with which we are perfectly familiar. Habitually and without reflection we ride and drive, and hunt and shoot and fish. But it is good now and then to reflect upon our common habits; and so we may examine ourselves as to this attitude in which we stand to the lower animals, this great privilege that we claim of paramount lordship. Is it justified? On what does it depend? There are those, as you know, who deny our right to take the life of any animal, whether for food or any other reason. They are comparatively few, perhaps, these vegetarians and anti-vivisectionists, but the question is, Have they right and religion on their side? I do not think so. Our necessary use of the service of the lower animals is justified if we realise our place in the ladder of creation, and, while we accept the pain of the animals subjected to vanity for our sake, are prepared ourselves to make the similar offering that is required of *us*. Think of what this ladder of creation is. The trees and grasses, as I

said, live their own life, and yet offer themselves to the need of the creatures; the creatures have their own lives to live, and yet they are subjected to labour and pain for our sakes; and we—what is the hope for which we labour? are we simply stronger and more skilful animals? No, a thousand times! Our true life is in the Divine Spirit. We groan, says St. Paul, waiting for the redemption of our mortality, its transfiguration into spirit, the manifestation of our divine sonship. The vegetable then for the animal, the animal for man, man for the Spirit. And if man forgets this, if after receiving the gifts of the lower worlds he stops short in self-satisfaction, and does not lay all that he is through their gifts at the service of the Spirit, the ladder does not reach to heaven; all the labour and pain of the universe ends in vanity, with no final hope—the travail goes on without a birth. There is nothing in all the world that we can point to as the justification of all the anguish.

For if we look back and consider the long centuries through which the universe has endured, the centuries before there was life on the globe at all, before so much as a seed could live; the centuries, again, before there was animal life; the centuries, again, before man; if we look back and imagine some celestial spirit watching the long process from the beginning, not knowing the purpose of God, and wondering what was to be the issue, the crown of all the myriads of years; wondering what in the end would compensate the strife and the pain, the untold agony of the ages;—could you, could any one, offer himself, just as a mortal man, to that angel's consideration as the sufficient outcome and final cause? Could you say, "I, with my forty or sixty or eighty years of life, am what the ages were labouring to produce? The hope of my birth, though I die to-night, is amends enough for all that vanity." Nay, looking through all the lists of all the world's worthies, who is there who seems worth all the grievous travail? St. Paul says there is

One who is worth it all, and for the reason that in Him the world reaches the stage of being which the Creator must have had in view from the first—a divine manhood, with the animal desires and impulses changed into something else, transfigured into spirit. As we look at Jesus Christ we recognise what—more or less consciously conceived—has been the hope of all mankind. That manhood of His, that flesh controlled by Spirit, is the manhood we desire. We recognise it as the crown of creation; we acknowledge it as that which “the prophetic soul of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,” has always had in view. This at last is, we say, the *Divine Sonship* to which the travail pangs of the universe have pointed, and in which they find their sufficient justification. In Jesus Christ we see the fulfilment of what must be the highest conceivable outcome of the creation purpose: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.”

And in the sending forth of His Spirit upon the Apostles the Sonship is begotten and

manifested in them, and through them it passes upon all who will receive it. The Church is the body of those in whose hearts the Spirit of Christ has aroused the spirit of sonship. Let me suggest one or two practical conclusions.

(i.) We are waiting, and I hope working, for the complete fulfilment of the hope of the world—the manifestation everywhere of the sons of God. But we find the task very difficult; and the Church needs at the present time all its hopefulness, if it is to push its frontiers in the modern world. The cry of Ecclesiastes, to which we listened this morning, that *all is vanity* is after all no piece of antiquarianism. It rings louder in our ears to-day than ever, “All is vanity, even the Christian hope”; and unless it is met by the irrefragable assurance that the Sonship is actually a real thing manifested in the Church, we shall be paralysed for our task. We must look to the Spirit of Christ in the Church to-day as the earnest and pledge of the glory of sonship to be revealed by-and-by. If there is the Spirit of Christ in the Church,

we need not despair of the world. Hope must always grow very like despair if attention is fixed only on the work to be accomplished, and no account is taken of the progress already made. And, again, it must turn to despair also if no thought is given to the forces at command for the accomplishment of the task—if God is left out of the problem. We must not deny facts, but we must look at *all* the facts. We must share in that double vision of George Fox: “I saw that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but I saw also that there was an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness.”

In regard to what some people are calling the hopeless task of spreading Christianity in our great cities, there are two practical rules to be borne in mind:—

First, to see that all our *secular* work in the world (it is often our strongest work) is in line with God’s purposes of righteousness and peace; that our words and deeds are swords of the Spirit of God, fighting on His side in the battle. Secondly, to see that all our

religious work, consciously undertaken, is as wise as it is energetic. Christian work is often so amateurish. But the Church is an army which needs wise leadership and common counsel if it is to succeed in its campaign. It needs all the powers of human nature at their height, the powers of youth and the powers of age—courage and wisdom.

(ii.) A second thought concerns our theology. Here we may bear in mind that we still have our spiritual treasure in earthen vessels, and the earthen vessel is still subject to decay. The creature was made subject to vanity; and there clings to our human thought, even about the divinest things, some of the mortality from which in this world we cannot escape. But this *vanity* is not unmixed with *hope*, because it is a sign of growth. If the Holy Spirit of Christ, by being more richly and bountifully spread in our hearts, make it impossible for us to assent to all the opinions of our forefathers, and express our faith simply in their words, we need not lament. For the deepening and broadening of the Spirit of

Sonship, the more whole-hearted knowledge and love of God, is one part of the manifestation of sonship for which we wait and long. As yet, even in the twentieth century, we have but the *earnest* of the knowledge of the Father that shall one day be ours, when the full Spirit of the only-begotten Son is perfected in us, and we know God as we are known.

(iii.) Finally, let us not ignore our relations with the lower creatures of God. St. Paul tells us that when we attain to our full redemption as God's children, then the whole creation also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and share the liberty and glory of the children of God. What in literal fact that promise prefigures we cannot even guess, for a world not subject to decay and death is to us inconceivable. But we have the promise that the new earth will not be subject to *vanity*, or, as St. John puts it, "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying: neither shall there be any more pain." That day is not yet. But the *anticipation* of such a new earth, the recollection

that the happiness of the lower creature is in mysterious ways wrapped up in our own, should lead us to consider how far, even now, we may mitigate their lot. Much has already been accomplished by the leaven of the Christian spirit. We are grown more kindly masters; our laws punish cruelty even in the act of killing; our men of science are not callous in their experiments. But who will deny that there is room for further consideration? Can we say yet that all sons and daughters of the great Creator are content—

“Never to mix their pleasure or their pride
With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels”?

Are beasts still hunted, not for food but that the sons of God may be breathed with exercise? Are birds still slain, not for food but that the daughters of God may wear their plumage? These are mysteries that the angels must desire to look into. The earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God; that is, in plainer English, the creatures are patiently waiting till we are better men and women.

VII.

SIN AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

“Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.”

—HEBREWS xii. 6.

THERE is a thought among those which our religion brings before us upon which we are never very eager to dwell, that of sin and its punishment. We are not eager to dwell upon it, because it is humbling to our human self-satisfaction, and our thoughts pass willingly to pleasanter themes. At the present day there is another reason which joins with our natural infirmity of pride to prevent our dwelling upon the fact of sin as so real and terrible and widespread a fact deserves, namely, that we look at it, as at so much else, from a merely intellectual point of view. We treat it, for example, as a disease to be studied, and playwrights and novelists delight in tracing its infection from generation to

generation; or we treat it as a problem of anthropology, and trace the primitive strains, bestial or savage, which still linger in civilised manhood; or we treat it as a problem in theology, and argue about the compatibility of the presence of sin in the world with the almighty love of the Creator. The intellectual point of view is a true one, and all these problems are of great interest; but the intellectual view is far from giving us the whole or the most necessary truth. Sin remains sin, and is most fruitfully studied *as* sin, *i.e.* as the disobedience of the human will to the law which it recognises to be good; and when sin is construed into disobedience it admits at once the idea of punishment or retribution, which (whatever else it is) is a vindication of the law that has been disobeyed. In an attempt to understand anything that involves a relation between two persons, it is always well to put ourselves by imagination in the place of both parties, and look at the matter from each side. That is what the Apostle is encouraging the

Hebrews to do in regard to this question of the punishment of sin. He says, in effect, "put yourself in the place of God, and look at the matter from His point of view. He is the Father of the children of men; you also are fathers, and so you have the required experience to enable you to form an opinion. How do you treat your children? Do you not chastise them for their good?" Let *us* ask the same question, but, first, about the nature of sin. Do we allow, in the case of our own children, such a thing as *sin*, as wilful transgression of law? If so, must not we allow it as between ourselves and God?

How do we regard our children when they do wrong? Take an instance: If a child gives way to violence of temper, do we content ourselves with tracing some law of heredity, and say to the child, "You remind me so much of your dear grandfather who was a very passionate man?" That may be true; but a wise parent would not tell the child so, because he would know that it was all-important for the child

to think badly of his passion as something alien to his true nature, and so gain the mastery of it; and the father knows, and the child knows, that it can master the temper, and often he does master it despite the existence of the bad-tempered grandfather in the previous generation and the primeval tiger in the more remote background. In the same way a good father treats lying and greediness and all the other forms of vicious self-love as sins against the law of the family. As parents, then, as law-givers and governors in the little circle of the home, we admit the idea of *sin*, that is, of wilful breach of the law of right; we do not treat wrong-doing as merely natural failure to reach a certain standard, a thing merely to be lamented as we should lament a distorted growth in a sapling; much less do we treat it as our *own* fault; because we know that the child's will might have acted in one way, and did deliberately act in another. And having this *idea* of sin as sin, we endeavour to implant the *sense* of sin in our children;

and to help us to effect this we call in the aid of punishment. What use does punishment serve in the family? Partly we mean it to be *deterrent*, both to the offending child and to the other members of the household; we want sin and sorrow to be associated in the child's mind as cause and effect; but still more we wish it to exercise a *remedial* effect upon character, and this it helps to do, in its proper character as retribution, by enforcing respect for the law which has been broken. It calls fresh attention to the law of the family, emphasises it, vindicates it. And by itself punishment cannot accomplish more than this. Punishment cannot make any one *hate* wrong-doing, or feel *reverence* for law. That effect can only be produced by the character of the father who administers the chastisement; whose own love of right and hatred of wrong, and love of the wrong-doer and zeal for his highest welfare, are clearly distinguished in and through the chastisement he feels bound to inflict.

If we turn from this domestic commonwealth to the larger circle of the state, we see there also that the public conscience does not in normal cases explain away breaches of the law as mere pitiable failure to reach a healthy level of action. It does not apologise for crimes as being merely the natural outcome of irresponsible forces, nor do criminals themselves plead irresponsibility. The *idea* of crime as *crime*, based upon the consciousness of a will to do or leave undone, is present in both law-makers and law-breakers. And here, too, the aim of a wise government is always to implant and strengthen the *sense* of crime and the respect for law. The task, of course, is much more difficult than it is in the family, because the authority of love represented by the father is, or seems to the criminal to be, altogether absent. If a prisoner in the dock were told that the judge upon the bench really loved him and punished him for his good, he would scout the idea as absurd. And so, in the state, punishment loses its best side in ceasing to be fatherly ;

it ceases to be *remedial*, and remains only *deterrent*. Even supposing, owing to a wonderful increase of sagacity on the part of the police, that the punishment of every crime became assured, still although the recognition of this inevitableness would certainly operate to deter men from crime, it would not disgust them with it. A policeman at every corner or a government auditor to every company's balance-sheet would represent to the man of criminal instincts only the will of the stronger faction, which a successful revolution might at any moment displace. What the state has an interest in doing, beyond that, is by every means possible to render the cause of righteousness *attractive*; to exhibit it as the ideal of citizenship, and to implant the sense of crime as being a wrong to the very name of citizen. The state's fatherly interest, as it cannot be shown in the punishment of crime, must be shown in the efforts it undertakes to prevent it. Here its genuine solicitude for its citizens cannot be misunderstood. It can do much

by improving the conditions of life in which crime is found most to flourish; by diminishing the opportunities and the temptations to vicious indulgence, and by instilling in its youth an interest in things honest and of good report. And when I say *the state* can do much, I mean the Christian earnest-mindedness of individual Englishmen acting through their central or local legislatures, and supported by the zeal of the magistracy and other executive officers.

But we have been considering the view we take of sin and of crime when we occupy the position of judge only that we might shift our position afterwards into the place of the guilty, and acknowledge in ourselves that responsibility which we recognise in our children; and also, that from what we suffer when our own children do wrong, from what we suffer from the wrongs done to society, we might stretch our thoughts to conjecture what the all-righteous Father must suffer from *our* iniquities, and so gain a livelier sense of the need of punishment to awaken

in us the sense of sin and the need of forgiveness. And Scripture tells us of God's fatherly chastisements; and speaks of them, like human chastisements, as both deterrent and remedial.

(1) They are spoken of as deterrent. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world shall learn righteousness." We can understand that the fate of Elymas, whom St. Paul struck with blindness, and the fate of the Corinthian adulterer, whom he "delivered to Satan," must have been of profound and far-stretching influence in the early Church. But how if God's judgments are not recognised as coming from Him? If any human events may be ascribed to the avenging hand of God, should we not assign to this cause pestilence and war? But it is common experience that times of war and pestilence, so far from being times of learning righteousness, are times of exceptional forgetfulness of it. God's judgments, like man's judgments, avail to deter us from sin only so far as they are realised as the inevitable accompaniment and shadow of sin—

its necessary consequence. A man, who by some intimate knowledge has realised the shattered health of the debauchee and the drunkard's paralysed will, does gain a horror of those sins which speeds him on the path of temperance and chastity. A student of history, who has realised that the decay of nations has in past times been brought about by the decline of public spirit and the growth of private luxury, will lift a warning voice to his fellow-citizens, and for his own part will devote himself without reserve to the public good. But we must allow that the least effect of the Divine chastisements is their effect as deterrent, because it is so hard to realise.

(2) The greater stress is laid in the Bible, as we should expect, on the side we have seen to be most efficacious in our human punishments, their remedial power, when the sufferer recognises them as chastisements from the Father in heaven. But how can this recognition be brought about in hearts where there seems to be no love of God to appeal to? Sometimes, in God's mercy, it

is the suddenness, the unexpectedness, of the blow, or the sharpness of the punishment, that strikes home to the conscience as by the very hand of God, and creates the conviction that God is not mocked, which is the root of penitence. Many of us may know cases where the detection and prompt punishment of a first offence has stopped a career of wrong-doing. Sometimes it is sickness that, by laying a man low, gives him leisure to consider his ways and take stock of the meaning and purpose of his life. Or sometimes it is from quite other sources—from books, from the wonder of the world, from the quiet influence of a Christian life, that there comes to a man the revelation that what he had previously held to be merely accidental disappointments, accidental troubles, were, in truth, Divine punishments, sent to wean him from his selfishness; and he confesses, “It was good for me that I have been in trouble, that I might learn Thy law.”

And then there arises a further question. As we compare human punishment, as it is

administered in the family and the state, with the chastisements of God, this point emerges. A son sometimes, despite all his father can do, goes, as we say, to the bad. The chastisements of love prove of no effect; and what punishments the state may have had occasion to inflict are equally unavailing. Punishment in such a case becomes perpetual; there is banishment from the family circle, seclusion from society. What will happen if the chastisements of the *heavenly* Father and *heavenly* Law-giver are as fruitless? Does there survive in them also, when they are proved powerless to deter or to remedy, their fundamental character of *retribution*. Must they maintain, as against the sinner, a continual assertion of the law of righteousness? Or, to put the question in a shape in which we are more familiar with it: When all the penitent sinners are forgiven, is it in the will of the righteous and eternal God to punish eternally the impenitent? To that question the highest human reason has always given the

answer *Yes*. The self-pleasing Sybarite may take another view, he may fall back on irresponsibility and predestination and say :

“Some there are who tell
Of one who threatens he will toss to hell
The luckless pots *he* marr’d in making—pish,
He’s a good fellow, and ’twill all be well.”

But Plato has no doubt. The sense of justice, as it is implanted in the human mind, demands that sin and suffering should go together. But then also the human reason has never forgotten that God is love as well as righteousness, and so it has cherished the hope that there must be, within the Divine armoury, weapons of punishment capable of piercing in to the most obdurate and impenetrable hearts, and arousing in them the saving consciousness of sin. There are men who, although they are unrighteous, yet by chance or their deep cunning escape the punishment of society, and whose moral sensibility is so blunted that it afflicts them with no remorse, so that they go through life with satisfaction

to themselves, though of all men they are most pitiable. What is it that our deepest nature demands for them? We say, perhaps, "They come in no misfortune like other folk, neither are they plagued like other men," and against their security our sense of justice rebels; but below that demand is there not also this, "Lord, that their eyes may be opened"? The human mind refuses to acquiesce in the victory of sin over almighty love. We still must believe, that although a man's will has worsened beyond all human power to save it, there must yet be, somehow, somewhere, beyond death, for the impenitent soul, capabilities of punishment so awful as to be at last remedial; the utter change of circumstances, the disbodying of the spirit, the accurate view of what custom had concealed, the clear vision at last of the consequences of sin, its ramifying through circle after circle of society, and multiplying through generations, the sight of the peace of the blessed, the dimly discerned justice of God:

construe all these things, if you will, as mere retribution—"the never-dying worm, the unquenched fire"—but may there not still be in them, as in the chastisements of earth, if they are *God's* chastisements, still (beyond the retribution) a remedial efficacy? We know at least one parable of our Saviour's, in which we seem to detect the first symptoms of such an efficacy. "And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom, and he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." So it begins, and so far there is nothing but the self-pity which has been the besetting sin of his selfish life; but when that petition is refused, out of the depth of selfish despair for himself there rises, like a clear spring in a filthy pool, a thought for his brethren: "Then he said, I pray thee, therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's

house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." And though in the story that prayer also is refused, the fact that it could have been made at all showed *some* response to the appeal of the flame, showed some remedial efficacy in the retribution, which proved it to be, what our faith in God tells us it must be, only a changed form of the Divine Love.

The problem whether any human will can reduce itself to *eternal* incompatibility with the will of God, so as to be cast as "rubbish to the void," is not a problem for us. With Scripture before us, we cannot (as some have done) deny the possibility. The problem for us is so to fix our thoughts on God's righteous law that we may never lose the sense of penitence, and so to fix our thoughts on God's fatherly love that we may never lose the sense of sonship. "Father, I have sinned; I am no more worthy to be called Thy son; but I accept my chastisement; I *am* Thy son—save me."

VIII.

THE WORK OF LIFE.

PREACHED IN THE TEMPLE CHURCH ON THE SUNDAY AFTER
THE DEATH OF THE MASTER, DR. AINGER, CANON OF
BRISTOL, FEBRUARY 14, 1904.

“ I have glorified Thee on the earth : I have finished
the work which Thou gavest me to do.”—JOHN xvii. 4.

If we might each choose his own epitaph,
who would not choose this if he could. To
go before the judgment-seat of God, say
rather, to go back to our Father's home in
heaven, with a clear conscience because our
mission on earth was accomplished. What
happiness could equal this? This is what
Christ did, and it is His name that we
proudly bear to-day.

Now it is plain that before we can say to
God that our work is finished we must be
able to say it is begun; we must be clear
that we have such a work. It is this thought

that I would suggest to you this morning as the keynote of our meditation for Lent—that we are each here for a purpose in the good providence of God, tending to His glory, all labourers in His vineyard, merchants in His exchange, builders at the walls of His eternal city, and the verdict on our life cannot be anything but this, whether we have recognised our task and done our best to fulfil it.

What, then, is our work? Undoubtedly it has many parts, and the details are peculiar to each, but, speaking broadly, we may distinguish certain universal elements in it.

First, we may say that our work here is the formation of our character. The many sayings of the wise, which so soon become commonplaces, about life being a place of trial or state of probation mean just this, that our natural instincts and desires are given us as so much material out of which to fashion our characters; they are the warp and woof by means of which we have to weave a tapestry fit for the eyes of God; they are so much clay out of which, by careful hands, on

the wheel of the world we have to fashion a vessel for God's glory. Here is a work that lies upon us all. How does it fare? Are we yet masters of ourselves? Do we know yet our defects, our deficiencies, and have we sought in any systematic way to remedy or supply them? Is it a case for surgery, from which the flesh shrinks? an eye or hand that causes us to stumble, and cries out for amputation? Is it sin that besets us or care that encumbers? What to each of us here at this moment as a moral being is the one thing needful? Is it regard for truth? Is it the control of temper or the control of evil desire? Is it the banishment of sloth or selfishness? All these are great works, difficult of enterprise, simple as they sound, but we know in our heart of hearts that they are works for God which lie upon all, and they are well worth adventuring in His name Who is both our source and our goal. Here, then, shall we say, is a great part of our life's work—the making of ourselves.

But this does not exhaust it; we have also

each our share in the making of others; and it is perhaps true that while we must keep a clear eye open to our besetting faults, we cure them best in the course of that other work which is not so self-conscious. Such work for others we all have. Some of us have been entrusted with a most noble and exacting task, the bringing up of a family in the discipline of Christ, and it is well for parents to remind themselves that this duty will not perform itself. But we all have some ties of kindred, we all have some who depend upon us, of whose conscience, though we may not recognise the fact, we are really the keepers; people with whom our words weigh, and still more with whom our actions weigh; people whom we help to mould into our own likeness, our clerks, apprentices, secretaries, employees, our juniors. That also is our work for God. And beyond them there are those others whom Christ called "our neighbours," those who can plead no tie but that of common blood or common need. To these also we have a duty in God's name. We

may each work a work for God's glory in making friends with those who plainly need friendship, whom our clearer judgment may instruct or our firmer will help to control. Would to God that *church membership* might once again mean something in England. Again, there is that work by which we take our place in the commonwealth. This, too, is from God, for "the powers that be are ordained of God," and this too must be for God. We all remember Tennyson's poem of the "Northern Farmer" who consoles himself on his deathbed with the thought that he had "stubbed 'Thornaby waste." It was a righteous boast. He had attempted something, and something he had done, before the night came and he could work no longer. Brethren, this satisfaction in work wisely undertaken and successfully carried through is a happiness that comes from God, and God grant that we all know what it is. Some work is, of course, richer than other in the width of its influence for good—the administration of justice, the dexterities of

diplomacy, the long labour of legislation, the command of sea and land forces, the patient work of investigators in science or history, the art of poet or novelist or painter, all these are works whose influence spreads far and wide from kingdom to kingdom, yes, and from generation to generation, and the glory of such work and its consolation in the hour of fatigue and perplexity and discouragement is that it may all be substantial labour at those eternal walls of His righteous kingdom which God is slowly building up through the daily task-work of men and women.

Such, then, is at least some part of the work God has given us—work upon the hearts and minds of ourselves and others in the manifold activities of civilised society. But all work that is real work and good work—in any trade or manufacture or branch of business—so far as it bears on the lives of men, is work in accordance with the divine will, and brings its blessings. Even work that may seem but play—the work of amusing the nation—which absorbs at the present day

so much skill, if that also is sound in its influence, it is work for God. Some of you may recall the story of the monk told by Anatole France who, before he entered religion had been an acrobat, and used to shut himself up in the church to tumble before the high altar—his feats of skill being the one thing of his own he had to offer. One feels in reading it that although, no doubt, God accepted his offering, yet it had been true work for God if he had used his talent for the recreation of his brethren.

What are the helps and the hindrances? First, *time*. Time is both a help and a hindrance. When we are young it stretches before us so endlessly long, that there seems nothing that may not be done and won in such length of days; and yet, just because it seems so endless, it slips away without being used, "like water that runneth apace." To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow. If our time is in our control, the way to make it minister to our work is to take exact account of it—to forecast the probabilities

of life, five more years, or ten, or twenty—to say I will do this thing to-day, and to-morrow that; this thing this year, and next year that: not to meet each day and each year with no purpose to fill it, or with the same purpose as before, still unfulfilled. There is a story in Herodotus of an Egyptian king to whom it was foretold that he had but five years to live, and he scornfully replied to the oracle of his envious god that he could make it ten by turning night into day. If that is a fable, it has a moral. But there is a true story told of a great French statesman who, observing that his family had generally died before fifty, made up his mind when he came of age that he must begin at once if he was to accomplish any work for the good of his country. So must each Christian say. “Oh, gentlemen, the time of life is short!”

And the second help God gives us, which also, if we please, we may convert into a hindrance, is what in one word we call our *circumstances*, our health or sickness, our riches or poverty, our position in society, our

chances. The whole power of *circumstances* to hinder has been compressed into that one sentence of the book of Proverbs: "The fool saith, There is a lion in the path." But experience teaches us that what we in our weakness call adverse circumstances are only God's medicines to fashion a strong heart in us. We know that the moral order of the world is so contrived that out of danger is begotten courage, and out of difficulty strength and patience, and out of pain fortitude and sympathy, and out of strife victory, and at the last, out of death itself—mourn over it as we may when it happens to others—life new and uncircumscribed and everlasting.

Such thoughts as these come naturally into our minds when any one, who has long been a familiar figure in our society, passes beyond our sight. Instinctively we begin to judge him, and the questions we put to ourselves are just those we have been considering this morning: What had our friend made out of his time and his circumstances? What had he made of himself? What had he accom-

plished for the world? I say, we ask such questions instinctively, because we have that in our human nature which is akin to the Judge of all the world, and though we recognise that our answers can only approximate to the truth, because we can judge only by the outward appearance, yet we make our judgment as true as we can.

And to-day, in this place, thinking of him, who is in all our thoughts and hearts, thinking first of his character as we knew it, we remember first of all its strong and simple affections; the genius for friendship which endeared him to so wide a circle, the large-heartedness which made him a generous critic and encouraging patron of younger men; the winning tenderness which made him in every society the friend of the children; the warmth of sympathy which sometimes gave to a mere customary greeting the distinction of a memorable event. And in lighter moods this sympathetic and affectionate temper quickened into an irresistible gaiety of mind and heart,

which age could not subdue, flashing out in mirth, or song, or wit, or dramatic gesture, reminding us at times that there was warmer blood in his veins than was made in England; reminding us, perhaps, also that the child's heart is nearer the kingdom than any well-meant Pharisaic gloom. And allied with this gracious temper, the charm of which none could miss, there were intellectual and moral qualities of a high order informing and bracing it. No brightness of manner could hide from any who had eyes to see, the serious view of life, the strong interest in truth, the deep and steady affections, the simple love of goodness that lay behind it. On Quinquagesima Sunday we rehearse in collect and epistle the praises of Christian sympathy, that fine quality, compounded of love of God and love of men, which is the very bond of peace and of all virtue; it was a quality with which your Master was richly endowed. It comes out with especial clearness in the moral judgments with which his books abound. Those

judgments strike a careful reader as approaching the ideal in their tempering of justice with mercy. The moral standard is never for a moment lowered; faults are always acknowledged to be faults; but they are shown also in their relation to the circumstances that engendered them, and in their relation to the whole character. It was this equitable habit of mind, high principled, even fastidious, but as sensitive to good as to evil—what St. Paul calls *ἐπιείκεια*—that I should distinguish as the most salient spring of what made him so lovable a character.

And then, to speak of his work. Here we cannot but observe the care with which he first limited his energies to what he felt he could do best, and then, having elected his aim, devoted himself to it thoroughly and unsparingly. There were many things which did not interest him, and he let them be; but there were also many things which did interest him, and were yet put aside, because his somewhat fragile health obliged

him to economise his force. He ranked highest, as the paramount duty of his life, his preaching in this place. To that he gave the largest share of his time and strength. 'This pulpit was "his joy and his throne." Churchmen, not of his own congregation, were sometimes critical of his abstinence from their committee-rooms; men of letters were critical of the small number of books that were the outcome of so accomplished a literary gift; but surely he was right. The first claim on a Christian teacher must be his Christian teaching; and certainly the congregations which for the last six-and-thirty years have gathered for worship in this church will not be those who will blame him for his resolution. To you he gave the best of his time and his thought; the residue he spent in writing the lives of one or two men of letters, whom he loved and wished us to love.

What was the chief characteristic of the teaching he gave here? The task which was occupying the leaders of thought in the

English Church when he was a young man, was that of reconciling the doctrines of the Christian faith with the new discoveries of natural science and the new science of historical criticism. Such vindications of the faith were too abstract to have any great interest for him. The vindication that he himself was always attempting was to show the correspondence of the Christian Gospel to human needs as they are revealed by experience of life. What interested him most in the world was human character; what interested him most in religion was the character of Christ; and the Christian faith presented itself to him as the divinely appointed means for bringing that influence to bear upon the minds of men. He was a keen observer and a shrewd judge of his fellows; and by watching the motives and tendencies that he saw around him he was able to speak here, as need was, a solemn word of encouragement or warning. And then he reinforced this first-hand observation by a study of the great students of

human life in the past. In the literature of our own country he was drawn, even with passion, to the genius of Shakespeare; and on the lower levels to men like Wordsworth and Hood and Crabbe, poets who were seers, teachers who, like himself, both knew and loved their kind. And so the main work he accomplished for his generation was to foster among the members of a society more interested in things than words an interest in the things that abide, the everlasting realities of faith, hope, and love. This was the work God gave him to do, and now it is finished. How he performed it God knows, who is the only Judge; and those know also upon whose lives his influence passed. The memory of his voice, of his unique personality, will not soon pass from this place, or from the hearts of those who loved him.

IX.

HOLIDAYS.

PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, AUGUST 2, 1903.

“He hath made everything beautiful in its time; also He hath set the world in their heart.”—ECCLES. iii. 11.

AUGUST is, in England, the great month of holidays. Many probably of those here in church this afternoon will soon be seeking rest and recreation away from London; and not only London, but all the great cities of England, will be pouring out their hundreds of thousands of tired workers to some neighbouring mountain or moorland or seaside village, in order that they may recover vigour and elasticity in the more tonic air. The gain to body and mind which such a change brings with it is now universally recognised, and one of the most beneficent enterprises of modern Christian charity is the despatch of poor children from our city warrens for

two or three weeks of country life—a charity that I take leave in passing to press once more upon your memories. But what I would ask this afternoon is the question whether the gain from this annual migration is only to mind and body, whether it is not, or may not be, a gain also to the soul. And I wish to ask the question, not about the poor, but about ourselves—Do we, may we, anticipate any spiritual profit from our holidays?

The first possible spiritual gain we might express in a phrase which has a long history, and call it the “return to Nature.” Civilisation, that spirit which knits men together into societies, and gives them rights and duties, and the freedom that is the other side of service, is apt to bring in its train another spirit not so admirable, the spirit of luxury, which begets innumerable desires, whose very existence is a distraction from the true ends of life, and whose gratification softens the fibre. These artificial and unnecessary desires have been well compared to the cords

with which the Liliputians bound Gulliver, each in itself finer than gossamer and to be parted with a breath; but together able to bind a strong man hand and foot. And so in all ages of high civilisation thinking men have sought to attract their fellows to a country life as an escape from the degenerating influence of cities. They have endeavoured to reduce them to their lowest terms as civilised human beings, to make them content with the satisfaction of simple human needs; to combine high thinking with plain living; and, although there has sometimes mingled with their endeavours false sentiment and false history, a childish irritation with gold as though it were the cause of all calamities, or a childish imagination of some primæval noble savage who could never have existed—still the call to greater simplicity of life has been most valuable; and it has found, as I say, its most practical suggestion in the counsel to seek communion with Nature; to recover strength like the fabled giant Antæus, by touching our mother earth.

If ever a call to simple living was needed in England it is needed to-day, and in all classes. There was never more wealth, there was never more ostentation and prodigality. When friends meet, joy seems to be sought not in their companionship but in lavishing upon them costly food and drink. And not only our kinsmen in America, but our neighbours in France, whom we are accustomed to regard as leaders of fashion, point the finger at Englishwomen for their tasteless extravagance in dress. It is a poor ideal, I do not say for Christians, who are bidden to be content "with food and raiment," but a poor ideal for men and women. And the cure for it can only be found in finding truer springs of joy. That is what the country can so well do for us if we will let it. It will provide us with simple and satisfying enjoyment, with more genuine happiness. We have but to take with us a seeing eye, a hearing ear, "a heart that watches and receives," and the world which God has made beautiful and attuned to our hearts will do the rest.

I call the gain, which such a return to Nature and a simple life does most certainly bring with it, a *spiritual* gain. Plainly, at any rate negatively, it is spiritual. At the very least, it prevents the expenditure of a man's spirit in so many ways that are wasteful, even if they are not shameful. But I feel sure we might claim for it a more positive spiritual influence. The poet Wordsworth, for example, was convinced (and he gave his whole life to preaching the lesson), that to find joy in the sights and sounds of Nature actually fed a man's heart, and disposed him to the good life. In the well-known lines written on revisiting the banks of the Wye after an interval of five years, he expresses what he himself had owed to the sights seen on his former visit—

“Oft in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart,
And passing even into my purer mind
With tranquil restoration.”

So far we should all agree; but he goes on—

“Feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure, such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man’s life,
His little nameless unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love.”

Wordsworth believed that happiness found among the things of Nature, the simple leap of the heart, for example, at the sight of a rainbow, transmuted itself into acts of kindness; and this need not surprise us, if we believe, as Wordsworth believed, that behind all the outward shapes of Nature lives and works the Spirit of God, Who through these things sheds into our hearts His own gifts of joy and peace.

I say, then, that even those who seek in the country only a physical gain, only rest and health, may well find a spiritual gain also in that peace of God which passes understanding, in that pure joy which the works of God inspire, for God is found sometimes even of those who seek not for Him. But, of course, the gain is infinitely greater if the

Spirit in Nature with which we seek communion is consciously apprehended as Divine ; if the return to Nature is realised by ourselves as a nearer approach to the wisdom and might and love and peace of God. Let me mention one or two ways in which country holidays may help us to become better Christians.

One gain that most certainly results from such a religious contemplation of Nature is the lightening of care. The cure for the anxieties that harass our life is that a man should be taken out of himself by learning two lessons : (1) that his own hopes and fears are not the hopes and fears of the universe—of course they may be, but often they are not ; and (2) that his own force and will are not the mightiest force and will in the universe ; but that there *is* a Will through which he and all men and all life subsists ; with which he may well see to it that his own will be reconciled. These lessons are pressed upon the attentive mind by the grandeur of the earth. “When I consider

the heavens," says the Psalmist, "the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which 'Thou hast ordained, I say, what is man that 'Thou art mindful of him?" And who can walk under a starry sky, even here in England, without the sense of his own importance dwindling, and without his thought growing of the greatness of God's wisdom? Or, again, who can lie awake in the hearing of the sea, or of a mountain torrent, without the sense being borne in upon him of God's sleepless purposes, ever working themselves out in the world He has made? "He fainteth not, neither is weary." Such sights and such sounds in Nature, with which our own affairs have no concern, do, if we will let them, bring healing to the swollen vanity of men; they soothe his fevered anxieties, and teach him that as he is not the maker and sustainer of the world, so a Maker there surely is, Who, as in all these outward things He has a purpose to fulfil, so also He has a purpose in our own lives, if we will but find and follow it. In

this way the majestic sights of Nature may minister health to our spirits and attune them to worship.

And there is a further way in which the world of Nature helps our spirits. We are moved to admiration and praise not only by the surpassing majesty of the world, but by its beauty, whether of form, or colour, or motion. Perhaps it is the quiet beauty of Nature—"the green fields of England"—that rouses most quickly a sympathetic response in the hearts of Englishmen. We all, here in London, recognise Milton's picture of—

"One who long in populous city pent
Forth issuing on a summer's morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms
Adjoin'd, from each thing met conceives delight—
The smell of grain or tedded grass, or kine
Or dairy—each rural sight, each rural sound ;"—

we recognise the experience, though we regret that the pleasant villages and farms are now so far from the centre. But what is the meaning of this peaceful beauty? What use has it in the wise purposes of Nature? All the business of agriculture and stock-rearing

could go on equally well if there was nothing in the fields from which man could “conceive delight.” The beauty of Nature is, indeed, something quite distinct from use; it is something superadded. It is like the chasing of a goblet, which would be as useful if it had no beauty of form. And is the beauty of Nature not due to a similar cause, to the artist’s joy in his labour? Is not this unnecessary beauty of the world the signature upon it of the God Who made and found it very good, while to us it is the announcement of that Divine joy and the summons to share it. That is the lesson our Master Christ teaches us. “Behold the fowls of the air,” He said; “Consider the lilies of the field.” These all have their use in the world, but why have they such glorious beauty, surpassing Solomon in all his glory? It is God’s good pleasure because they are His creatures. And modern science cannot but concur. Colour, indeed, it tells us, serves a useful function in Nature’s system—it hides and protects, or it warns, or it attracts. Colour,

then, is useful ; but why such colour ? Why the dove's iris, or the feathers of the peacock ? Only a few animals, so far as we can tell, though they distinguish colour, receive from it any pleasure ; and the flowers cannot enjoy each other's beauty. Is it not largely for our sakes—for our wonder and delight—that we may share in the Creator's joy ? The beauty of the world remains one of the chief witnesses—perhaps the chief witness of all—to God's existence behind the phenomena of sense, and not the least witness to His love for mankind. Beauty speaks straight to man's spirit, and the fact that there is in the world all the lavish beauty that we know, far beyond the limits of use and need, tells us that the world is made and controlled by a Spirit Who has joy in beauty akin to our own ; and has given us these things richly to enjoy. Every one has felt at some time in gazing at the blue and purple and scarlet of an evening sky what Jacob felt at Bethel, that this earth is indeed the house of God, and we knew it not. May not that be the

message that *all* beauty has for us—that the world has not come together at adventure, but is what it is by the Spirit of God? If that is so, the beauty of the world, if it is to have its perfect work in us, must lead us on from admiration to worship—from the creature to the Creator.

But there is a question that may be rising in some of your minds which, though it is too large a question to handle at the end of a sermon, must yet be referred to. It is quite true (you may be thinking) all this that you say about the beauty and majesty of Nature, and the joy it inspires, and if that revelation stood alone we should know what to think about God; but it does not stand alone. Granted that the spirit, of whom we catch glimpses behind Nature, seems indeed to be a spirit of joy. Is it not also a spirit of pain and death? Are we to forget the pain and death, and attend only to the joy? I think one answer might be that we must at any rate look to the relative proportions of joy and pain. Looking at the life, say,

of any of the wild creatures, apart from man's kindness or cruelty, can we call it a life of pain in the same sense that we can call it a life of joy? Surely we cannot. Or, again, we may remember what science teaches us, that even the death of the individual has, on a large scale, subserved the gain of the race, so that it has not been wanton. But our best answer is to restrict the question to the sphere where we can study it best—that of the human creature; and here we can see plainly not only how much more widely spread joy is than pain, but how much stronger it is, so strong that it can triumph over it. What is the meaning of a martyrdom, if not that joy is stronger than pain and death? We are apt to speak of our Lord Jesus Christ as a Man of Sorrows, but was He not rather a Man of Joys? Even at the last it was “for the joy set before Him that He endured the Cross, despising the shame.” And I am sure we each know some one in our own circle who, by the serenity of his joy amid

suffering—yes, and what is harder, amid bereavement—has set to his seal that Christ's Spirit still lives in the world. The pain endured by man must not be allowed to overpower the evidence, which human joy presents, of the goodness of God. And, further, the fact that the Christian Church, following its Divine Master, is ever striving to diminish the pain of the world, and does diminish it, is proof in itself that it is not the Creator who inflicts the pain.

While, then, we do not shut our eyes to the woes of the world, let us not shut them either to all its manifold glories, for "the world is charged with the grandeur of God"; let us allow all the beauty and majesty we shall see around us this summer to work in us their full effect of joy. For God has not only made everything beautiful in its season, He has also set the world in our hearts—given us affinities with it, and it with us—so that if we will but attend, it will, of itself, lift our hearts in admiration and worship.

“O Lord my God, great are the wondrous works which Thou hast done, like as be also Thy thoughts which are to usward. If I should declare them and speak of them, they should be more than I am able to express. Let all those that seek Thee be joyful and glad in Thee, and let such as love Thy salvation say alway, The Lord be praised.”

X.

CHRISTIAN PHILANTHROPY.

PREACHED BEFORE THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF LINCOLN'S
INN, ON HOSPITAL SUNDAY, 1905.

“ By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another : as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”—JOHN xiii. 35.

PHILANTHROPY, then, is the great sign and test of Christianity. As we look around us and reckon up all the charitable institutions of England and the wealth that flows into them, we may lay the consolation to our hearts that we are thereby declared to be a most Christian people. By this all men shall know that we are Christ's disciples. If that mood ever comes over us, as when we take up the Church of England Year-Book, and see how much money has been raised for education, how much for missions, and so forth, or as we look down the subscription lists in the

advertisement columns of our journals, there may perhaps come into memory the picture drawn in our Gospels of the almsgiving at the Temple Treasury, and our Lord's comment thereupon as to the proportion it bore to income; or perhaps there may come to mind some strange words written by the apostle St. Paul in a letter to the wealthy city of Corinth: "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing." The answer, then, to the question whether philanthropy is the great sign of Christianity must be, that it depends upon what philanthropy means, whether it means the love of men *in the sense* in which St. John applies that great word to God; a love of man like God's love of man, which looks to man's real and deep needs, and for their sake is prepared to make a great sacrifice. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another: *as I have loved you*, that ye love one another."

It may serve to brighten the distinction

for us if we look back to quite early days when Christianity was beginning to make its mark and challenge recognition on account of its distinctive qualities, and contrast it with what the pagan world of the day had to show in the way of philanthropy.

For it must not be imagined that philanthropy, in the common acceptation of the term, is a peculiarly Christian quality. Philanthropy was preached by the Stoic philosophers, and practised under their guidance by the better spirits throughout the Roman Empire before Christianity emerged into notice. That saying, which we so often take into our own lips as expressing the very spirit of philanthropy, "I am a man, and so find an interest in everything human," is, you remember, a commonplace put into the mouth of a Roman gentleman in a play of Terence, and represents the ordinary Stoical doctrine.

"Nature bids us assist men," says one Stoic teacher; "and whether they be bond or free, gentle or freed men, what matters it? Wherever there is a *man*, there is opportunity for

doing good." And this philanthropic doctrine was a doctrine which bore fruit. Take, for a conspicuous example, the celebrated Pliny, governor of Bithynia, who wrote that well-known letter to the Emperor Trajan, so interesting to us now. He describes the short way he took with Christians in his province, which was simply to execute them for obstinacy. Pliny, then, it is certain had no secret Christian leanings, but we know that he spent his fortune in charitable institutions for his native town, founding a library, a high school, home for poor children, public baths, and so on; and he is only a conspicuous example of what was a general custom. The rich men of the municipalities all over the Roman Empire showed their public spirit by building aqueducts, colonnades, theatres, bridges, public baths, and so forth for their fellow-townsmen—magnificent buildings, the ruins of which still amaze the world; and not only so, but they expended immense sums upon the poorer class *themselves*, in feasts (often leaving bequests for this

purpose), and in supporting their burial societies.

We cannot deny, then, that if philanthropy means only public spirit in regard to one's community and generosity to its poorer members, the pagan world under Stoical teaching had become to a great extent philanthropic. But what would a Christian of the day—one of the obstinate sect whom Pliny sent so summarily to execution—have said to such philanthropy? We can see two or three things he would have said. First, he would have pointed to the theatres with their gladiatorial shows—on which benefactors were always most lavish, and said that as long as they condemned fellow-creatures to kill each other for their amusement, they could not pretend to love humanity. By the very existence of such shows their Stoical boast was shown to be idle. The baths and colonnades and aqueducts he would have found no fault with, but have approved. But, in regard to the schools and libraries, he would no doubt have said that whether

they were a boon or not depended on what was taught in the schools and what was read in the books; and in regard to the large sums spent upon free feasts, he would have quoted St. Paul's saying about "crumbling away" one's goods to feed the poor without any real love for them, and that other great saying of his that "the Kingdom of God"—of which the Stoics spoke as well as the Christians—"was not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit of God." The *Christian* love of man, that is to say, is primarily concerned with man as he really is, *on the Christian theory, i.e.* not a mere creature of flesh and blood, who needs feeding, clothing, and burying, but a spirit capable of communion with his Maker in a life of righteousness and peace and joy; and therefore, in all efforts of the Christian philanthropy that is the truth that was ever kept in sight.

The difference between pagan and Christian philanthropy is very clearly shown, in a crucial instance, by the contrast between the

different views they took as to the freeing of slaves. Among the Romans it was a great sign of philanthropy to be liberal in manumission ; and the slaves themselves were allowed to save up money to buy themselves free. But the Christian Church, which had before its eyes constant evidence that freed men were often among the worst members of a community, more avaricious and tyrannical than others, had no interest in encouraging the change of status. They adhered to the rule of St. Paul: "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called"; for *within* the Christian society all men were brethren. That was the first thing to secure—equality in the Church. The change of status would come in time, when no Christian could consent to have slaves.

That contrast helps us to realise the paramount interest of the Church in the good life, the life of the Spirit. Of course, the Christian society recognised that the spirits of men inhabited mortal bodies, which needed food and raiment, and at the end honourable

burial, and from the very first it set itself to care for the poor in these respects. The duty of liberality was impressed as the most elementary of Christian social duties; but even here the distinction of its aim showed itself; its charitable relief in each community was very carefully organised, and distribution was made through the deacons according to the need. Special care, for instance, was taken of widows and orphans, as St. James had prescribed, because they had no natural protectors; and no less attention was paid to the precept of St. Paul that a man who did not (if he could) provide for his own family had denied the faith.

Beneath, then, what might seem the merely natural duty of feeding the hungry, there lay the spiritual interest of so helping the body as not to hurt the soul. The Christian idea was that everybody was to be helped by his brethren to become a perfect member of the Church of Christ by the gift of what he happened to lack, whatever it was. His particular burden was to be borne

in common. That was one great lesson taught, and understood to be taught, by Holy Communion. As a modern poet has well expressed it—

“ The Holy Supper is kept indeed
 In whatso we *share* with another's need,
 Not what we *give*, but what we *share*.”

And the predominance of the spiritual interest becomes more conspicuous when we go on to consider the care of the sick, and those in trouble and in prison. They were to be *visited*, so as to be supported, not only by the alms, but by the prayers of the Church. We are told that the Christians of Egypt went even as far as to the mines of Cilicia to encourage and edify their brethren who were condemned there to hard labour; and to visit those in prison they took long journeys. We feel as we read these stories of Christian philanthropy that, while money was not spared when money could do good, it was yet the least part of what the Christian contributed to the relief of his brethren in Christ. There is an interesting reference to Christian philan-

thropy in a satire of Lucian upon an impostor called Peregrinus, who had joined the Church, and was afterwards expelled from it, and who, while still a Christian, had been thrown into prison for his faith. Lucian, as you know, was nothing if not critical, and it is extraordinarily interesting to get a glimpse of the Christian Church through his eyes—to see what struck him as new and strange in it. And as a practical illustration of Christian philanthropy, and its difference from pagan philanthropy in the reign of M. Aurelius, I may, perhaps, be allowed to read a short passage about the imprisonment of Peregrinus, and how the Church behaved on the occasion.

“When he was in prison the Christians, considering it as a calamity affecting the common cause, did everything in their power to release him, and when they found this impracticable they paid him all possible deference and respect. Early in the morning you would see waiting at the prison doors old women, widows, and orphans [an interesting

reference]; and some of the principal of them would even sleep in the prison, having bribed the gaolers for that purpose. 'Then plentiful meals would be sent in, and they read their sacred books together. Moreover, there came men, sent from the cities of Asia by the Christians, as the representatives of their churches, to assist him in his defence and encourage him. It is incredible with what alacrity these people defend their common cause. They deprive themselves of everything to promote it, and so, Peregrinus being in prison for their faith, they collected money for him. These poor people, it seems, have persuaded themselves that they are immortal, and will live for ever. So that they despise death, and willingly devote themselves, being taught by their lawgiver that they are all *brethren*, and that, forsaking our Grecian gods, they must worship their own sophist, who was crucified, and live in obedience to his laws. Accordingly they look with contempt on all worldly treasures, and consider everything as if it were common property—an opinion

adopted by them on no very sound principle."¹

That description of what Lucian had seen with his own eyes, introduced into his narrative simply for its curiosity, gives us a very vivid idea of what "philanthropy" could mean in the early Church. The things that struck Lucian were the real and unaffected interest that different Christian communities, as far distant as Asia from Syria, took in the misfortune of any of their number as soon as it came to their ears, the zeal with which they manifested their sympathy, and the way in which they regarded their worldly goods simply as a trust held for the common interest. Such a glimpse of what Christian love meant in the early centuries suggests to us certain considerations and principles which may be of use both as a guide and as a stimulus in our Christian philanthropies to-day.

(1) It reminds us that Christian philan-

¹ Quoted by Harnack, "Expansion of Christianity," vol. i. p. 236.

thropy is essentially the philanthropy *of a society*. Christian philanthropy is active love ministered *among brethren* by one to another, and that is only possible in a society where the needs of each member are known—needs for livelihood, for protection, for sympathy—and so a helping hand can be held out to ease the particular trouble. The motto of the Christian society is, “Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.” It is a *mutual helpfulness* that the law of Christ enjoins.

But how is that possible in the Church of England to-day? I answer, it is still possible if Christian men will use the parochial organisation that exists, and supply it where it is lacking. There are to-day congregations in London where the Christian society is realised as vividly as ever, where the laity recognise their responsibilities, and co-operate with the clergy in a common zeal for the benefit of the parish; and why should not this happy state of things be universal? In America it is the rule. Why should it be the exception in England?

Think how the condition of each parish would improve if its improvement lay as an aspiration and a task upon the hearts of all the Christian residents; if they met regularly for counsel and co-operation, and divided amongst themselves, according to their respective gifts, the duties that the needs of the place suggested; to take but one instance: if the visitation of the poor were not the official business of official visitors, but was undertaken by Christian men and women (not even in minor orders), a few houses by each person, where they could make friends! Christian philanthropy, then, we say, is the philanthropy of a society in which every member alike has a duty and a claim.

And, as a corollary to that, we must lay it down that each single and separate society of Christians must feel its unity with the whole, and not restrict its interest to its own body. Nothing was so remarkable in the early Church as the habit of inter-communion among churches, resting upon the strong sense of the unity

of all in Christ. Churches were constantly writing letters or sending representatives to other churches, just to show an interest in their affairs, sometimes sending advice, sometimes money. And where, as in London to-day, some parishes are rich and some very poor, it is surely right that this sense of a union underlying the differences between parish and parish should be dwelt upon and strengthened, and result in a manifestation of pity. And then, again, the early Church felt its union, not only with the various churches of its own nation, but with those of the most distant peoples. Have Christians to-day lost this power of imaginative sympathy? I will ask but one question in regard to that. Are the Christians of Europe, who pretend that they are powerless to influence the tottering Turkish Empire in favour of its Christian subjects—are they, can they be, animated by the zealous and unselfish love by which men are to recognise the disciples of Christ? Could the Turks say of us to-day, “See how these Christians love one another”?

(2) A second principle of Christian philanthropy is that in its love for man it never forgets the true definition of man as a "child of God." It seeks his well-being in the highest sense. In all the causes it advocates it keeps in view its one main object, which is to make men good, and will have nothing to do with schemes which, while professing to be charitable, tend to degrade character. It does not, however, despise what might seem a merely natural philanthropy. Far from that; it seconds it to the best of its power, so far as its ends are wise, because it knows that body, and mind, and spirit are closely intertwined. It recognises that to some men God may speak through the intellect, to others through the emotions, aroused by some beauty of art or nature, and it is a root principle of Christianity to share with the unfortunate whatever we have ourselves found profitable, and what but for our help they could not enjoy. The Church of Christ looks with more than satisfaction on all efforts to improve the material condition of the poor,

whether by better housing, or better wages, or better conditions of labour, or better education. When public-spirited men do to-day what the Romans did in their more thorough fashion under the Antonines—build great public buildings, colleges, schools, museums, picture galleries, and so forth—the Church rejoices; but of all these more outward helps to the good life it most welcomes hospitals. Hospitals seem, indeed, the most characteristically Christian of these outward ministrations, because they lay stress on the infinite value of each human being, and because they have no other origin than pity, and minister the spirit of love more directly and more profoundly. In the pains and skill of the wise physician and surgeon and nurse the patient may hear the very tones of the Master, saying “Be whole of thy disease”; and such Christian charity, now as when Christ walked in Galilee, does more than mend the stricken body. It touches the heart. It gives men a nobler idea of human nature, and wakens often a spring of gratitude, which

continues to flow as a greater kindliness when they go back to their homes.

(3) And our third and last principle is that Christian philanthropy, in its effort to promote whatever cause it sees to belong to the kingdom of Christ, grudges no cost. You remember how Lucian remarked on this ungrudging liberality, and thought it rested on no sound principle. The principle, of course, is that all Christians are brethren, members of the one family of Christ, and brethren do not lay stress on mine and thine in the hour of need. They hold all that they have in trust for the family cause, the family honour, the family enterprises. If the need is clear the only question is one of method. How best? Of the cause that appeals to us to-day the need requires no arguing, and the Hospital Sunday Fund has proved itself a wise administrator of the sums entrusted to its management, so that your liberality will suffer no check.

XI.

THE TWO GIRDINGS.

PREACHED ON ST. PETER'S DAY, 1902, BEFORE THE HONOURABLE SOCIETY OF LINCOLN'S INN ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEFERRED CORONATION.

"Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."—JOHN xxi. 17, 18.

THE Evangelist sees in these words of our Lord a signification of the martyrdom by which St. Peter at the end of his service should glorify God. But looking to the wonderfully rapid growth of the idea of the Christian Church, and the immense broadening that succeeded the conversion of St. Paul, we may perhaps take the words more generally of the whole later course of St. Peter's ministry, and in that way we may find in them an appli-

cation to ourselves. We may see in them, for example, an expression of that great change which comes over all our service, whether of God or our neighbour, as we leave youth behind and pass into middle life. At the beginning we are full of an exhilarating sense of freedom; what limitation we are conscious of comes by our own free-will. We look round the world and we say, "Every man has business and desire such as it is; here is my desire; this shall be my business." We choose our profession; we choose our political party. And it is so, even more strikingly perhaps, in religion. It may be that the faith of our fathers seems too narrow for us, its definitions too rigid. Here also we will choose for ourselves. And if, in God's mercy, what we choose is still the faith of Christ, we choose it with something of that strong personal feeling of love and loyalty to Christ as our own self-chosen Master, which inspired the first disciples, and is so naïvely expressed in that speech of St. Peter: "Lo, we have left *all* and followed *Thee*." And who would have

youth other than so—full of zeal, of initiative, of imagination, with a heart set upon high ideals, and an intelligence that thinks everything within its scope, and also with a will of such puissant force that we recognise the kinship with that will by which the worlds subsist. But each day that we live shuts us in within ever-narrowing walls; each day shows us more clearly, that the condition of realising any one of the hopes with which we set out lies in renouncing so many of the others. And not only so, but it lies in co-operation with and dependence upon other men. We choose our profession and our party, and by that act of choice we take our place in a society of many members, most of whom we must recognise to be not less well equipped than ourselves with the forces of will and intelligence; and here, it may be, our truest wisdom will be found in subduing our self-will to authority, and performing the tasks allotted us to the best of our power. Or if we have the necessary insight to perceive where improvements are needed, still

any proposed reform has to recommend itself to the intelligence of the society, and adjust itself to its experience. So that commonly the reform as it is finally agreed upon is very different from the idea with which the reformer set out. And sometimes, and not unfrequently, *this* happens; the scheme on which the hearts of a few wise men are set seems to be gaining ground year by year, and then, who knows how, from beyond the world, as it seems, there comes over the people a wind of some new enthusiasm, and the ideals so sedulously pursued seem by comparison insignificant and the old watchwords cease to attract, and the reformers themselves are carried with more or less reluctance on wider ways not of their own choosing. So it was with St. Peter, and so it is still. How deep an echo must these words of our text find in the hearts of statesmen who have been anything more than opportunists. "When thou wast young thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth

thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

The thoughts I would suggest for our consideration this morning shall be these two simple but none the less important ones: (1) That under Divine Providence we have each a work to do for God, each a station and duties in the Divine society; *some* sheep to feed, *some* lambs to tend; and (2) That the way in which we can best do this work, while it must task our own utmost capacity in wisdom and power, is yet (because it is under Divine power and wisdom) subject to changes beyond our calculation, which confound the wisdom of the wisest and lay the greatest power in the dust. And I will illustrate these reflections from what is to-day the one dominating thought in the mind of all of us—the thought of our King.

(1) The thought that every place in the Christian society must imply duty was applied to kingship by our Lord Himself: "You know," he said, "that among the Gentiles kingship means authority; with you it shall

mean service." That solemn rite, which was to have been celebrated in our ancient Abbey Church last Thursday, was the outward and visible sign that the head of the British Empire acknowledged these Christian conditions of kingship, and received his crown under pledge of fulfilling them. Our English sovereigns are anointed "King by the grace of God" after covenant made to rule according to the law of God; and the symbols of authority are committed to them one by one by the representative minister of the Church with a prayer that they may be used in the cause of God and righteousness. No monarch, we can well believe, could be so consecrated to his high office, without the conviction deepening within him that his election was a call to service, that he was a minister of the Most High God, a shepherd of God's people. In the same way, to take a parallel case, any one who has read the Ordination Service must feel that no one could be ordained to the ministry of the Word and sacraments without retaining ever after the

sense that his dignity lay solely in his service as a shepherd of souls under the Great Shepherd. But literature from its very first dawn is full of the cry, prophetic or satirical, "Woe unto the shepherds that feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flock?" There creeps so easily into the mind of the ordained person, be he king or priest, the thought of what is due *to* him rather than of what is due *from* him. The flattery he gets to his face from those who whisper about him behind his back easily disposes him to think more of the dignity of his office than of the right discharge of his duties, and so breeds wilfulness and license. That is no new reflection; it is, as I said, the commonplace of literature. I will not dwell upon it. For us it is more profitable to take the step further, and apply the reflection to our own lives. "Woe to the shepherds who feed themselves." Are, then, kings and ordained priests the only shepherds? Is there not a sense in which we all share a kingship? Is not St. Peter's doctrine of the

inalienable priesthood of the laity a topic familiar upon our Protestant platforms? If that is so, while we may be justifiably critical of the vice and luxury of kings, of the arrogance or idleness of priests, whenever we meet with them, and perhaps they are less common than we think, let us see to it that we act up to our own high calling in the Church of Christ. “Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these? Feed My sheep.” Do *we* love Christ; then does *our* love drive us to feed sheep or tend lambs? Have we “girded ourselves” to some task in which our own profit is not concerned? have we committed ourselves to any cause, so as to give others a chance to carry us whither we would not? Let us not accept that miserable view of a layman, that he is a mere non-clergyman, a negative thing, a man unfettered by creeds and articles and definitions—that is but a poor idea of a layman. A layman is a member of the laos or people of Christ, and as such he is like his brethren of the clergy, both free and bound, free and yet the servant

of Christ in whose service alone he can find true freedom.

(2) I pass to our second thought, that all our works, even though they be begun, continued, and ended in God, are liable to interruption and frustration in the Divine wisdom; and I take the instance, which is in all our minds, of the sudden stop put to the greatest religious act of the people as a people—the King's coronation, which was to have taken place last week. Our King then was, we may say, in the act of girding himself for this act of worship, when he was girded by the messenger of sickness and carried whither he would not. The sudden appearance of the angel of sickness or the angel of death amid the festivities of the great ones of the earth is one of those contrasts that has always arrested and awed the human mind, and especially the Teutonic mind. Every one is familiar with Holbein's drawings, in which kings and knights and wealthy burghers, when their minds are freest from care, are touched on the sleeve by a messenger whose business brooks no delay.

And our own great dramatic poet has put this same *macabre* reflection into the lips of the most ineffectual of our English kings, in words that perhaps have been beating through our memories (whether we would or not) many and many a time during this past week—

“ Within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court ; and there the antic sits
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,
Allowing him a breath, a little scene
To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks,
Infusing him with self and vain conceit,
As if this flesh which walls about our life
Were brass impregnable, and humoured thus
Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle wall, and farewell king.”

That sort of reflection is inevitable if it is upon the mere pomp and pageantry and outward trappings attending a coronation that our attention has been fixed. The contrast between the anticipated homage and the actual fact of disease strikes just that note of pathos which is so dear to the weak human heart. But if our interest has been deeper, if we have seen in that seeming ostentation of national glory only so much

fuel for the divine sacrifice, and in that elaboration of musical rite an attempt to honour, not an earthly monarch, but the King of kings, then the thought that presents itself is altogether different. We ask, indeed, wherefore this sudden check? Why was this waste of substance made? And when *that* question is asked, the answer comes still as it came to Job: "Who is this that darkeneth the divine counsel by words without knowledge?" We cannot attempt to fathom the reason of these events. Nevertheless, there is one thing we can and ought to do, we may look for the bright side of such events and watch for the good that God is bringing out of the evil. Another of Shakespeare's kings, and a much more manly one than poor Richard Plantagenet, whom I just quoted, speaking, when himself in imminent peril of death, about all such calamities, says—

"There is a soul of goodness in things evil
Would men observingly distil it out."

I think we may all without presumption observe a soul of goodness in the present evil.

Without dwelling upon the fact that all sickness is an outward conscience, and so may be blessed to the royal sufferer himself, a topic better suited for the King's own confessor than for a general congregation, we may note three points upon which I will touch very briefly.

(i.) First, we may note that the loyalty of Englishmen to the throne has grown deeper in these last few days. A king arouses necessarily less personal loyalty than a queen; his public actions are more canvassed, his private failings more narrowly scrutinised. Men are apt to judge him merely upon hearsay, and to condemn without charity. Sickness recalls the fact of our common frailty, and inclines us to take note of what is better rather than of what is worse. Readers of Browning will recall the telling way in which he puts before us this property of sickness by the story in "Ferishtah's Fancies" of Mihrab Shah in whom one of his poor subjects would acknowledge no virtue till he heard he was wasting with an internal ulcer.

(ii.) And then, secondly, we may note that ties between members of a nation and an empire, just as those between the members of a family, are drawn closer by common sorrows even more than by common joys. The joy may have a large admixture of selfishness, and its expression may bring to the surface some of the baser elements of our poor humanity; but sorrow, as it unites, purifies; and so the wise king noted it in his Book that “It is *better* for us to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting.” Every one who has seen how the King’s illness has touched not only his own subjects but members of foreign and not too friendly nations, will feel that this fact of experience has been once more verified.

(iii.) And the third point I would ask you to note is this: St. Paul’s teaching about calamity is that “whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.” May we not apply this teaching to *national* misfortunes? When we begin to be afraid that the nation is coming to care too much for wealth and too little for

righteousness, too much for show and too little for realities, a sudden blow, which seems a summons to consideration, helps us to pluck up heart, for it seems to be an assurance that God has still a good purpose in the English people. To other nations doubtless God speaks in other ways; but this is a message in a language we understand; we recognise the symbols, the code. It is not for nothing that our deepest thoughts about life and death come to us from the Bible. What St. Paul echoes from the Book of Proverbs our own most reflective poets are content still to echo as their own profound conviction, and call us—

“Happy if we can
Be crossed and thwarted as a man,
Not left in God’s contempt apart,
With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart.”

XII.

THE GRACE OF KINGSHIP.

PREACHED AT LINCOLN'S INN CHAPEL ON THE SUNDAY
MORNING AFTER THE CORONATION, AUGUST 1902.

“Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”—LUKE xviii. 14.

THESE are the words that the Gospel for to-day has left in our ears. They are not, of course, our Lord's own words, but a very ancient Jewish proverb, to be found both in the Book of Ecclesiasticus and the Book of the Proverbs of Solomon. Our Lord uses them, as He so often used the proverbs of His day, to bring His teaching under some principle already recognised by His hearers, so that it might find more ready access to their hearts. In our Lord's use of proverbs, therefore, the important thing is not so much the proverb itself as the special appli-

cation He makes of it. Now, there are two occasions recorded in the Gospels on which He summed up His lesson by quoting this particular proverb—once when He was laying down the doctrine of what constitutes true greatness as between man and man—the doctrine that greatness is to be measured by service. “He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.” And once, as we heard in to-day’s Gospel, when He put the doctrine of acceptance with God into the vivid picture of the self-righteous Pharisee and the penitent Publican. “This man went down to his house justified rather than the other.” May I this morning suggest to your minds this double teaching of our Saviour about humility before God and before man, as a fit topic for our thoughts in view of the great event of yesterday—the Coronation of our King.

(1) And first, our text reminds us that that great service of Coronation was, in fact, the King’s going up into the Temple of God *for acceptance* by Him, and it reminds us of

the terms of the acceptance. Our King is accepted by his people, not according to caprice, but according to the constitution of the realm; and that far greater and more important acceptance at the hands of God is also not a matter of caprice, or we should have no means of gauging it; it is according to the constitution of the Kingdom of Christ; so that we can pledge, as we did yesterday, the goodwill of God to our Sovereign if the Divine condition has been fulfilled. A coronation has something of the nature of a sacrament. It is a prayer for blessing that pleads a promise; a prayer, therefore, that contains within it the answer pledged to it by God Himself if His condition is fulfilled. And what is the condition of God's blessing upon the King? It is a humble and contrite heart. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Just as in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper we lift up our hearts to the Father and ask Him to ratify the most sure promise of His Son to strengthen us with His Spirit, as we

for our part obey His commandment and keep the feast which He ordained; and just as in the confirmation of our children we follow the apostolic ordinance, and do not doubt that as God blessed the first generation of Christian people by the laying on of the apostles' hands, He blesses us in like manner through their successors; so it is in the crowning of our kings. We crown them as they were crowned by God's people of old. We send our kings before the altar of God; we put words into their mouth after the law of God, not words of pride, "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are," but words of contrition, of humble faith, of resolved obedience, and then we claim with confidence the sure mercies of David. We anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord, and proclaim them "blessed and consecrated" to the kingship — kings not only by the will of man and the order of the realm, but also by the grace of God.

Now this thought of the sacramental char-

acter of Coronation is one that we should do well to ponder, for it is one, we can see, that in older days would have saved both king and people from presuming upon the rite as if it were of magical efficacy; and in this day it might save us from the danger of disparaging it as a mere ceremony. That Divine right of kings, sealed to them by the sacred anointing, has become a scoff and a by-word in our history—"the right divine of kings to govern wrong." But would it have become so if the terms on which kingship was actually received had been kept in mind, if the seal of acceptance had never been divorced from its necessary complement in the prayer of the penitent, "God be merciful to me a sinner"? There have been unworthy kings in England as there have been unworthy priests among the clergy, and unworthy communicants among the laity; and in each case the reason of the failure has been, that grace has been powerless because it has not been met by faith. Grace is correlative to faith, whether the grace be

the grace of kingship, or of priesthood, or of ordinary Christian life. We must not then, because of such failure, deny that there is any grace of kingship at all, and treat coronation as but a court pageant; if we do, we must be consistent, and deny also the grace of orders and the grace of sacraments. Nay, we must go further and deny that there is ever any response to human prayer; for all these rites of the Church are but prayers for special grace to meet the special needs of human life; and it is not to be thought that in our simpler and more personal needs God should hear and answer, and not where the need touches the interest of a whole people. But our truest appeal here, as in all matters of religion, is to experience. If we have known priests "turned atheist as did Eli's sons," we have known others whose lives have witnessed to the grace of God in their hearts; if some of our kings have been false to their high calling, others have shown by the devotion of their lives that God had touched their hearts.

No one doubted of the late Queen that she was queen by the grace of God; and that His grace may be vouchsafed to her successor is the hearty desire, and should be the fervent prayer, of this imperial commonwealth.

(2) Humility before God, then, for King as for people, consists in the prayer for God's mercy and for His grace to live well the life He has given us to live. And what is humility before men? It is to be content to measure our rank by our service, to treat what rank we have as a claim upon our service; if we have none, to treat service as equivalent to rank. The kings of the Gentiles, said Christ, measure lordship by their power of exaction; among you it shall be measured by your power of contribution. It is more regal to give than to receive. The true king of men is their servant. Shakespeare, who teaches us so many practical lessons, has shown us among his portraits of English kings two or three types of what kingship may be; and he has in

several instances brought his monarchs upon the stage, speculating upon the inner meaning and value of their kingship. In Richard II. you have a young, sentimental prince, with a strong sense of his sacred character as "the deputy elected of the Lord." He tells us that—

"Not all the water in the rough, rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king."

But his notion of God is of an absolute monarch who is above law, and this is the position he takes up as God's deputy. So that when his misrule has its necessary result, and the people fall away from their allegiance, he feels he has been mocked with the mere shadow of kingship—

"Cover your heads, and mock not flesh and blood
With solemn reverence : throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty,
For you have but mistook me all this while :
I live with bread like you, feel want,
'Taste grief, need friends : subjected thus
How can you say to me, I am a King?"

And then we have Henry IV., the clever intriguer, the strong usurper ; he also in-

veighs against kingship as a mockery; he grasped at it for its splendour, and finds that the mere labour of keeping what he had stolen robs it of all the anticipated joy; he sums up *his* experience of kingship in a cry for sleep—

“How many thousands of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep!

O happy low, lie down.

Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.”

And then we have Henry V., who with less intellectual power than either of his predecessors, has what they lack, the one thing needful in a king—a care for his subjects rather than for himself. He, too, soliloquises upon kingship, and in a curiously puzzled speech comes to the same conclusion as his father, that ceremony is a poor substitute for the sound sleep that private men enjoy. But there is this immense difference between the two—that Henry V.’s anxiety is caused, not by fear of losing his kingdom, but by care for his subjects. He may feel, like the others, that

a good deal of the *state* of kingship is hollow—

“The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The inter-tissued robe of gold and pearl.”

But he feels, though he cannot put it into words, that there *is* something in kingship besides that; and what that is we are left to gather, not from his words, but from his life; it is that which he had in common with the peasant whom he was tempted to envy—the life of *profitable labour*.

In these days, when the constitution of England has re-shaped itself into a democracy, not so much as formerly of the material prosperity of the nation depends upon the personal labour of the sovereign. An English king to-day, if he has still opportunity of making shipwreck, like Richard II., has no chance of immortalising his memory by personal achievements like those of Henry V. But though certain avenues to success are closed, there are still ways—nay, there are more ways than ever—in which the king may spend himself for his country's

interest. The sceptre of modern kingship is not authority, but influence; and if there is any meaning in Christianity, influence is not the lowest form of regal power, but the highest. By a word of counsel, often by a mere question, the king in a modern state can draw the attention of all to what is amiss in the body politic, if only he has the wisdom to see it; by showing his own interest he can arouse the interest of the whole people in some movement that is languishing for want of intelligent support. Recent efforts for the better housing of the poor, and for the endowment of the public hospitals, are two examples of social movements in England which owe what success they have achieved to the influence of the Throne. And in regard to the *spiritual* prosperity of the nation, the influence of the Throne has not only not diminished, it has infinitely multiplied itself. A mediæval monarch like Henry V. might set the fashion of good living in his court and capital, but a monarch to-day may set it, we may

almost say, to the civilised world. And if we believe that character is the one thing of supreme importance for a nation, could there be any loftier or more necessary or more potent function in the State than that of setting the type of high morality and noble manners, and broad unselfish interests?

The King yesterday took the traditional oaths of the monarch of this Empire, one of which was the promise *to the utmost of his power to maintain the laws of God and the true profession of the Gospel*. That the full significance of these solemn words is realised by His Majesty must be the hope and prayer of the nation; and we may believe that they have been taken in no perfunctory spirit, from the letter which on the eve of the Coronation he addressed to his people, one sentence of which I will take leave to recall to your memory: "The prayers of my people for my recovery were heard; and I now offer up my deepest gratitude to Divine Providence for having preserved my life, and given me strength to fulfil the im-

portant duties which devolve upon me as the Sovereign of this great Empire." That the King has thus humbled himself in gratitude before Almighty God is the surest pledge that he will humble himself to serve his people; and such humility, before God and before men, is the only true exaltation.

XIII.

PROFANITY.

PREACHED IN ST. SAVIOUR'S, SOUTHWARK, AT THE COMMEMORATION SERVICE OF ST. OLAVE'S SCHOOL, 1904, AND IN ELY CATHEDRAL TO THE KING'S SCHOOL, 1905.

“Looking diligently lest there be any profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.”
—HEBREWS xii. 16.

IN the early chapters of Genesis we have several times repeated a contrast of disposition, the greatest that so primitive an age could afford, that of the shepherd and the hunter. We have it in Cain and Abel; we have it again in Isaac and Ishmael; we have it most distinctly and vigorously wrought out in Jacob and Esau. It is a contrast worth considering, because beneath the infinite variety of circumstance, and apparently of disposition, in our modern civilisation, the same elementary contrast is always coming

out. Some of us are fond of excitement and adventure and a spice of danger; others are fonder of home and of books. There are these two sorts of natural bent; and though our parents and guardians do their best when we are young to graft one upon the other and so produce a more healthy mind and body than either would be separately, the two tendencies remain to the last, and with them their especial dangers. What are the dangers? The danger of the merely outdoor life is, from finding so much pleasure in the exercises of the body to find all pleasure there; to be wrapt up in sport wholly; to take an interest in nothing of human nature but its muscles, which is as degrading as to live always in the society of dogs and horses. On the other hand, the danger of the indoor life, the temptation of the boy with brains, is to set too much store upon cleverness and to despise everything in comparison, to despise truth, honour, religion; to think that cleverness can pick every lock, and win every success.

Now it is quite plain that neither brains nor muscles alone, nor even these combined, really make up true manhood. Higher than both is character; and to each natural bent, to one as much as the other, the way is open to achieve character. To win character is the only true success in life, for that is to fulfil the purpose of the world. We are sent here with all varieties of physical and mental equipment, with all kinds of special powers adapted to special work; but for each of us, when life is over and the audit comes, the question must be, What in the process of living have we made out of all this raw material of desire and impulse, what at the end of the process are we ourselves? This old-world story, then, of Esau and Jacob is roughly the history of a success and a failure to win character; the success of Jacob, the failure of Esau. Esau, one would think, had most of the advantage at the start; probably every boy here likes him better than Jacob because he was not mean; but for all that he failed in life, and for that failure there

are two chief reasons. The first is that he never learned self-control. He was always at the mercy of his impulses. He lived in the feelings of the moment. And the second reason is what the text calls his "profanity." "A profane person, as Esau." By profanity is meant a living wholly in that side of our life on which we touch the animals to the neglect of that side on which we may touch God; and so, when choice has to be made, a preference for the lower over the higher, for the things of sense over the things of the spirit. It was profanity in Esau to surrender his birthright, with all that it implied in religious privilege and responsibility, for a mere meal.

Now think of these two faults as they might affect any of ourselves. Esau, we say, was a child of impulse. Why should that be wrong? Impulses surely may be good. So they may. So were Esau's sometimes. The story tells how he came to meet the brother who had so cruelly wronged him, and how he was overcome with an impulse of generosity,

and fell on his neck, and kissed him, and forgave him all that was past. And then—Jacob hurried away as fast as he could, and put the river between them lest his brother's mind should change. 'The weakness of impulsive goodness is that no firm dependence can be placed upon it. And then, again, impulses are not always on the side of goodness; are apt, indeed, not to be. We have a strange way of speaking about faults into which we are led by impulse. We say, "My tongue ran away with me," or "My temper got the better of me," or "The inclination was too strong for me"; just as though it was the most natural thing in the world for a man, made in the image of God, to be haled hither and thither by tongue or temper and overcome by chance desires. Whereas the very prerogative of a human being, what distinguishes him from the lower animals, is that he should not be at the mercy of impulses. God's distinctive gift to man is the gift of will, that power by which we, and we alone among all the creatures of

God, can say, "I will do this; that I will not do."

What is the medicine for the impulsive nature? How may the will be strengthened? By prayer and "watching thereunto with all perseverance." Of prayer I will only say now, that to have learned to pray is to have learned the lesson best worth learning for your life to come. By "watching" is meant the careful formation of good habits. I remember when I was an undergraduate reading in a sermon of Dr. Newman's his advice to do every day something irksome to one's natural disposition, in order to win self-mastery; and I remember putting this down, in the vanity of inexperience, to his Romish asceticism. And then some time afterwards I found the same piece of advice, not in a religious writer at all, but in a book dealing with the construction of the brain; which pointed out that habits are nothing but pathways through the nerve-centres of our brains, which the currents of energy find it difficult not to employ when they are once made, just as we

find it easier to walk in beaten paths,—so that it behoves young people to spend any trouble at first in laying down right paths of habit. And of all habits the most valuable is the habit of self-control. I would say, then, do not let any of us, who find ourselves endowed with an Esau's nature, take credit for not being sly or close-fisted or sullen like Jacob. Let us not congratulate ourselves on our generosity if it is only the generosity of unreflecting impulse. Let us first learn our brother's self-control. Let us learn not to say more than we mean, not to spend more than we can afford, not to be at the mercy of momentary feelings, or chance companions.

And then, for profanity. It seems to us, as we read the old story, to have been almost incredible folly in Esau to have flung away his birthright for so trifling a consideration as a meal. But take a parallel case in modern life. For any one now to cheat at cards is to forfeit the honour of a gentleman, yet for the sake of winning a little money men have been known to make this sacrifice. Well,

there is a higher birthright even than that of an English gentleman which belongs to all of us as children of God; and this we recklessly cast from us when we allow our conduct to be dictated by the desires of the flesh. And I doubt if there is any one here who has reached manhood that could not tell of some who have "gone under," as we say, through not setting their hearts on higher things than the things of sense. I could tell you of some ruined by drink, of others ruined by gambling. And they were such bright boys, popular with every one. One's heart goes out, like Isaac's heart, to the young Esaus of the world—bright, passionate, strong, generous, frank, affectionate; but we know that without the fear of God all this charm will go to waste. "If only," we say, "God could be to them a living God, 'about their path'; if they could but be taught not to be profane."

What is the cure for the unspiritual view of life? How may we save our young Englishmen from the failure of Esau? The

horror of profanity is that it is so hard to cure. I said just now that our wills may be strengthened by prayer and watching; but if we are profane, if we never think of ourselves as God's children, we shall have no desire to watch or to pray. If Esau had ever pondered the promise to make of him a great nation, could he have so lightly flung it from him for a moment's gratification? Let us ponder God's promises. Let us read the Book that tells us of our birthright as God's children. Believe me, there is no protection against profanity like the reading of the Bible. For no one can read the Bible without the thought ever presenting itself and recurring, that God is interested in human life, that He has set a standard for it, that there are deeds which He hates and deeds which He loves, and that there are means provided by which man may be helped to live the life that God approves. To those who will read constantly in the Bible the thought of God as caring, loving, guiding, becomes a constant thought; and to have

such a thought of God, to live under the sense of God's good providence, is to have the strongest defence that we can have. May I urge upon all of you the habit of reading a few verses of the Scripture every night before you go to bed?

One word more. We must not suppose, because the Apostle is pointing his moral against Esau, that he is therefore holding up Jacob for our unqualified approbation. It must strike you that Jacob, in his own way, had to learn not to be profane, before his life could be made a success. Jacob's profanity was not of the careless, impulsive sort; it was calculating. He thought he could keep in with God and secure His blessing, and yet be dishonest; and God taught him by twenty years' hard discipline that religion means righteousness. My brethren, it is of the first importance for us all, whether we have the Esau or the Jacob temper, to flee from profanity; to understand and keep in mind what our birthright is—that we are children of God and brethren of Jesus

Christ. Success in life, as we shall see more clearly at the end of it, is to bear a character that God can recognise as inspired by the Holy Spirit of His Son; and the only way to win this character is to live frankly and fearlessly as the children of God and the brethren of Jesus Christ.

You are going, many of you, out into the world of men, to take up as men the work of the world in the professions, or arts, or the life of commerce, and the moment is an inspiring one: you are resolved by God's help not to fail; you are resolved to live a life that shall be worthy of your parents, and your school, and your country; yes, and you will do so if you are inspired with the determination to do your work, whatever it is, "as ever in your great Task-master's eye." The secret of success is to remember that as your work is His work, so it must be done by His methods; and that no momentary achievement in wealth or position can compensate for the loss of the birthright, the "desire lift upward," "the conscience as the noonday clear."

XIV.

EDUCATION.

PREACHED BEFORE THE ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS AT
ST. PHILIP'S, BIRMINGHAM, MAY 25, 1905.

“That our sons may grow up as the young plants, and that our daughters may be as the polished corners of the temple. Happy are the people that are in such a case.”
—PSALM cxlvi. 1.

LET us take these two sentences from a familiar Psalm as expressing, in a figure, two points in our ideal of education—steady growth and incorporation in the Church of God. They are expressed in a parallelism, after the way of Hebrew poetry—the one assigned to our sons, the other to our daughters—and perhaps the distinction might appear justified to our older ideas of education, which laid more stress on the intellectual development of our sons, and on the virtue of our daughters, but *we* here, at any rate, shall regard the distinction as made simply for the sake of

clearness and emphasis; the ideal we know is a double one, and we can lay stress on one side or the other, but in our heart of hearts we have a common desire, for both sons and daughters, that they shall all grow up both intelligent and good; we want them all alike to grow like young plants, steadily and quietly, day after day taking in on every side the nutriment they need until the plant has become a goodly tree; but also we must wish that of all alike this growth may be in grace, that the increase shall be "the increase of God," in wisdom as in knowledge, in spirit as in intellect. That is what we wish, and that is why we are here. Long since, at their baptism our children were committed to God's charge, they are now *God's* husbandry, *God's* building, and you are the workmen appointed by Him, the gardeners in His vineyard, the builders of His temple, fellow-labourers with God in the mighty task of regeneration. That is a noble profession; none can be higher, and all branches of the profession are on a level, for "all service

ranks the same with God"—there is no first or last, primary or secondary. And so because God is so high and we so unworthy, we are met here to-day to praise His glorious name who has deigned to make use of us and given us a place among His ministers; and we are met also to ask His forgiveness for all the negligences we are conscious of during the past year—our shortcomings, feebleness, sloth; and also for our *ignorance*. In our instructions, given this year past, it may well be that some things have been said too lightly, some mistakenly; we may have misconceived the nature of the plant we were tending and handled it unwisely; we may have carved upon the stones patterns of our own devising instead of the pattern shown us in the Mount. It may even be (though God forbid) that we have, unknown to ourselves, "offended" some of Christ's little ones; that is, not only not helped, but actually hindered their growth; and so we shall ask to-day, as all God's workmen must always ask, that we may be cleansed from our *secret* faults and

from *presumptuous* sin. But that we have done; we have made our humble confession and received, as aforetime, into penitent souls God's free pardon; and now before we separate we would meditate a little upon our work, and get some light from God's Word for our better direction in the happy year that lies before us. Let us take, then, these two ideas from the Psalmist.

(1) "That our children may grow up as the young plants." It makes a good deal of difference how we figure to ourselves our work as teachers; whether we think of our pupils as so many pieces of paper on which we have to write, or so many cabinets of pigeon-holes into which we have to place assorted objects, or as something living and growing which we have to feed aright and train aright. For this thought of growth, this thought of the child as a living organism, at once suggests to our minds certain consequences.

For example, it suggests the importance of environment. We know how living things depend upon their surroundings for nourish-

ment. They need air and sun; and the children of civilised nations are as sensitive as plants to their physical surroundings. Churchmen have been accused sometimes of inattention to the health of their children's bodies in their zeal for their souls. The charge is not true; but if it were true it would be a grievous fault, for apart from the importance of health in itself for the work of life, we know how soul and body are intertwined, and how they affect each other. The supply of suitable school buildings does not fall within the teachers' province, but inside the buildings at our service much can be done in the care for cleanliness, for order, I would even say, for beauty. If some of our children live in homes that are mean and squalid there is all the more reason why the school, in which for so many years they spend much more time than in their homes, should teach them something of what a home should be, a place of cleanliness and order and refinement, so that these forms of simple beauty should, as Plato says, "flow into their eyes

and ears like a health-giving breeze from a purer region." And, in speaking of our children's environment, we remember that where there are ways of escape into the country, in the presence of Nature teachers may find it possible to do for their children something of what Wordsworth tells us his sister did for him—

"She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And love and thought and joy."

And a second thought suggested by this image of a growing thing is the importance of *habit*. "As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined." If, then, by our faithful and earnest endeavours we train our children with minds erected, when they are old they will not grow awry. How can they? Nurture will be to them a stronger nature if only our discipline can be continued long enough. The aim we shall have always before our mind is to set up good *habits*; and of the habits we shall try to foster I will mention just two, which are specially important because inclusive of many others: (1) The habit

of *attention*, which is the key to all the doors of knowledge; some people go through life without (as it appears) ever having learned to fix their minds; (2) and the other habit I will specify is the habit of respecting the voice of conscience, so as to speak the difficult truth because it is the truth, or to do the difficult right because it is right. For that way the will is trained and strengthened and the fibre hardened.

And then, thirdly, this thought of quiet growth suggests that no little part of the teacher's function is the function of influence. Of course, he supplies the necessary food the plant requires, he teaches; and, as I have said, he plays the gardener's part, and lops and prunes and ties up what needs strengthening, and so forth. But as in Nature the greatest part of the work is done by the silent and perhaps unconsidered influences of sun and rain, so it is with the teacher. He is impregnating his pupils all day and every day with his own nature; through the pores of their souls they take in his influence; he

is their outward conscience; to win his smile they would do much; instinctively they test themselves by his standard, they come to look at things as he looks at them, to use his phrases, to pass his judgments. If the teacher is one who hates a lie with all his heart, the hatred of lying will be in the air that the children breathe. With teachers, as with parents, it is what one *is* that matters so much more than what one *says*, because it is what one *is* that shines through all our unconscious moments; the children are not deceived, they are shrewd judges. For our children's sakes, then, as much as for our own, we have need to keep our loins girded about and our lights burning. For their sakes we have to sanctify ourselves that they also may be sanctified.

(2) I pass now to speak of the second thought of my text, the special ways in which we may help our children to preserve their place in the Church of God.

My first suggestion is that they should be taught to realise it and to be proud of it.

A man would make a bad soldier who was ashamed of the colours, and one feels sometimes that those feelings of *self-respect* which are called out in the ordinary run of boys by wearing a uniform that stamps them as members of the army or civil service of the Empire, would respond as readily if they could be made to realise that the Christian Church is a still prouder service in which they have actually been enrolled. Is the Church as *real* to them as the State? Perhaps neither are very real. We are shy people, we English; but we lose much by not making our children realise their place in the Empire and in the Church of Christ. I would suggest that the appeal to *loyalty* could be made more use of than at present it is. There is a wonderful fund of loyalty and unselfishness in children, and the *attachment* we all desire to strengthen between them and the Master comes most vividly home to their hearts, through this idea of loyalty to the King whose subjects they are. And if children are taught some of the stories of the martyrs, they quite easily under-

stand that the service of Christ must in every age imply the preference of His will and the surrender of our own.

In the next place, I would suggest that no better training-ground for the Christian character could be devised than the little world of school, a society which has a single aim, while it includes many individuals of different types of disposition. Nowhere so clearly and so convincingly could *common interests* be set out as paramount to merely selfish interests; nowhere so easily could a real meaning be found for the Christian law of love—a commandment which comes to mean something to a child as soon as it is interpreted by the Golden Rule; and so the lesson is really learned and understood which is the secret of happiness in the larger society of the world, that our duty consists in doing to others as we would have them do to us.

And then, again, we have the Bible from which to instruct our children. And here, if I may offer a word of advice, it would be this: We must remember always the aim of

our Bible teaching, and lay our stress where the stress ought to be laid. Our aim is not to teach Hebrew history, but to direct the children's love to God and the things of God. We teach them the stories of the Old Testament as types of the virtues we wish them to love or the errors we wish them to avoid, trying to make the impression clear and vivid upon their generous hearts; letting them blame frankly what they see to be blameworthy; never letting them believe that they are to praise in Jacob or Jael actions which their Christian consciences feel to be wrong; above all, trying to avoid conventional language which so easily becomes cant. The other day I saw two little ragamuffins standing by Livingstone's grave in Westminster Abbey and reading the inscription. You may remember that, after speaking of Livingstone's efforts to put down the slave trade, it concludes with some words of his asking God's blessing on any one who should heal the open sore of the world, and I asked the youngsters what this open sore of the

world was; and one of them seeing I was a clergyman replied in a voice totally devoid of interest, "Sin, sir." It was quite plain that he was giving a merely conventional answer, saying what he thought I expected, talking cant, and he was quite cheered when I showed him that the words really meant something—the slave trade. For older children who know the stories, nothing is so profitable as to show them the unity of the Bible as a unity of growth in the knowledge of God; God gradually revealing more and more of His nature as men could comprehend it, until at last the full revelation was given in Christ Jesus, the only-begotten Son.

And there is one thing more we can teach them, even more important than the Bible, and that is to pray. This is no doubt primarily a parent's duty, but so often the teacher has to be in the place of a parent. Your opportunity may come with this and another child when they are in trouble, and from penitence or bereavement are feeling the need of a friend; but at least you can always prevent

school prayers from becoming a mere piece of routine work. I remember, as vividly as if it was yesterday, how my old headmaster looked when he led the school prayers. We had no doubt (whether we prayed ourselves or not) that he was praying, and praying for us. And that brings me to my last word.

I have been speaking of your work as that of ministers of God whose privilege it is to take of the things of God, whether the things in heaven or things in earth, and show them to the love of little children; but to all ministerial work there are two sides; you are a representative of God to them, but you are also a representative of them before God. You are the Lord's remembrancers. One by one you will plead for your children before Him, that He will send upon them His manifold gifts of grace according to their particular need. A writer of our time has told us of the awe with which it filled him, all through the months when Khartoum was being besieged, to know that he was among those for whom Gordon prayed daily. We

may well believe that it is no small part of our work on earth to pray for one another; and for whom can we pray more earnestly and hopefully than for our children, that being planted in the house of the Lord they may flourish in the courts of the house of our God, and bring forth fruit in their age.

XV.

THE EARLY RELIGIOUS TRAINING OF CHILDREN.

A PAPER READ TO THE PARENTS' NATIONAL EDUCATION
UNION, MAY 17, 1901.

A FRIEND of mine was told the other day by a young mother that she refrained on principle from teaching her children religion; she only taught them to say their prayers. I refer to this, not because of any value that attaches to the young mother's principle, if principle it can be called, but because it suggests at once the chief point I wish to impress in this paper, that the early religious training of children should, before all things, be a training in prayer. Prayer is the characteristic action of religion, and to teach prayer is to teach religion. For what does religion mean? Religion to us implies the belief that this world is directed in its course

by an All-Wise and Almighty Ruler, who made us and who cares for us; made us in His own image, so that from the best we know we can conjecture His perfection, and be secure that every instinct we admire in our fellows is a breath of His inspiring; made us, as He makes everything, not complete and flawless at a stroke, but by creating a living principle with capacities for growth; and not only has so made us, but cares so much for what He has made that it should prosper and become by growth what He intended, that the whole lavish beauty of the material universe, the long course of history, the multiplied incidents of everyday life, are simply so much food and exercise for these living souls, to strengthen and train them, that they may grow in accordance with the true idea of their natures. Religion implies some such belief in God and in His purposes; and the characteristic action of religion, in consequence of this belief, is an act of prayer, by which we seek communion with this Father of our spirits. No religious

training, therefore, is really religious which does not teach our children to pray.

On the other hand, to teach prayer is implicitly to teach the elementary facts of religious belief. Those great truths of which I spoke, which we desire to implant in our children as axioms for the conduct of life—(1) that there is a great Creator of the world and Father of men, who though they cannot see Him yet sees them, and reads their hearts and takes an interest in all they think and do; and (2) that there is, in consequence, a right and a wrong way of life, a way of living that pleases Him and a way that displeases—are, as matter of experience, most practically taught by teaching them to pray. For, as the Apostle says, “he that cometh to God must believe that He is”; his coming ensures that; and the words he is taught to say in prayer imply the Divine attributes; *e.g.* the prayer for God’s will to be done and the prayer for forgiveness teach in the most effective manner the doctrine of the two ways, the broad and the narrow. Many

mothers show their instinctive sense of the importance of the children's prayers by being present when they are said, and giving any word of caution or advice that the day's occurrences suggest to them, when it can be translated at once into a prayer for help and pardon.

In this matter of teaching prayer the thing of first importance is to teach the children to pray naturally. They must be encouraged to pray for wants that they really feel, to seek their Heavenly Father in their real troubles, and to thank Him for the real joys of their life. Hence it is important that they should use a form of prayer that admits of expansion and variation. It is absolutely necessary that some form should be used, because prayer can only be taught at all by teaching a form of prayer; and also because it is important that all the elements of prayer—adoration, petition, intercession, thanksgiving—should be represented from the first. But it is very important that all these sections, except perhaps the first, should be

as elastic as possible, so as to take account of special circumstances as they arise. In teaching children to pray there is no difficulty in the general idea. At the start they take you at your word, and pray as you bid them, nothing doubting, and are very ready to suggest new subjects for prayer and for thanksgiving. But one difficulty may arise in the matter of petitions. How far should these be regulated? On the one hand the parent may feel that it is better to let the child pray for what it really wants, only explaining that God will not give what is not good for the child to have; on the other, he may feel that it is wiser from the first to mark a distinction between prayers and selfish desires — as for a new toy or a fine day for a holiday; and this seems the wiser course. If the mother will hear the child say his prayers, her presence will not check the spontaneity of his requests, but it will act as a check upon prayers that are merely selfish; or if such are expressed, she has the opportunity to point out their selfish-

ness. There is also, of course, the danger that if such prayers are allowed to be made and yet are not answered, the child's faith may be rudely shaken. A boy once confessed to me that when he wanted something very badly he used to pray that he might not have it, as, after many disappointments, he thought this the best way of securing it. If, however, a prayer is not selfish, but only seems trivial to us, we should be chary how we interfere with it; since, if the absolute importance of our requests to the order of the universe were the condition of being heard, which of us could dare to pray? The one thing needful in prayer is sincerity.

The other day a small boy was staying in my house, who was in the habit, when at home, of saying prayers only at night. But he discovered that my children said prayers also in the morning. He told us that he didn't see the use of saying the same prayers twice a day, so he would do this: in the evenings he would pray as usual for his own people, but in the mornings, as long as he

stayed in the house, he would pray for us. I felt that since saying his prayers was felt by that small boy to be such a reality that it must not be trifled with, we might be grateful for his intercessions even for the few days of his lodging with us. Here is another story. It was noticed not long ago in our household that the name of the new nurse was dropped from the children's prayers with one consent—I suppose by arrangement—after she had been weighed in the balances and found wanting, and the name of her predecessor was substituted. I do not adduce this as an example of Christian behaviour, but as a proof that prayer was felt to be so real a thing that it was indecent to pretend to pray for a person who had by acts of cruelty put herself beyond the reach of natural affection. I believe, then, most firmly that the half of religion, which is indeed the whole, lies in the habit of natural prayer. The child's prayers will alter and become less selfish and more Christian as his idea of the Heavenly Father shapes itself more and more

after the likeness of the Eternal Son; but he will not need to become more religious. As a part of this teaching of prayer, I would include the teaching of reverence, which is a constant act of faith in the presence of God. Before the child can have any clear idea of who God is, or what His attributes are, he can be taught to behave himself reverently at prayer, at grace, in church. Example here, as always, is far more than precept. Parents are sometimes culpably heedless in the liberties they allow themselves in these respects. They know their own inward reverence, and so are too careless of their outward conduct. But such liberty is a stumbling-block to these weak brethren. It is worth remembering, too, that an early habit of reverence is not soon lost: it tides the child over the miserable stage of self-consciousness; and sometimes over the later and more desperate stage of doubt.

Alongside of this practice of religion there must of course go, even with the youngest children, a certain amount of instruction in

religious ideas—in which term I include both faith and morals. For faith and morals should be taught together. The doctrine of what God is implies the doctrine of what He wishes us to be; and both will be taught from the Bible. If the question is asked, What parts of the Bible are best fitted for instructing the children in righteousness? the answer must be its stories; and among these, first and pre-eminent, the story of the life of Christ, interpreted as the love of God incarnate. There is inexhaustible fascination for children in the details of His works of mercy and in certain of the parables, such as the “Prodigal Son” and the “Good Samaritan,” which teach their lessons to twentieth-century English children almost as vividly as they did to their first hearers. But we must not forget that these stories of God’s love were told to people who had already, through centuries of tutelage, learned the lesson of His righteousness. And this for children is the more important lesson to be taught; not as more important in itself,

but because it is harder for them to learn. The Old Testament, therefore, for them, as for the Jews, must play the schoolmaster. And how admirably full the early books of the Old Testament are of stories which teach the elementary but all-necessary virtues of truth, obedience, moral courage, self-control, fairness, brotherly affection. Think, for instance, how many lessons for children are contained in the story of Jacob and Esau, or Joseph and his brethren, or David and Jonathan, or Samuel, or Daniel. Or again, how emphatically the double truth of God's mercy and righteousness is taught in the stories of Elijah and Jonah. These ancient tales are well-springs of inspiration for the good life. To very young children they will be told by the living voice; only let them have books with reasonably good pictures, which arouse their curiosity, and fix the stories in the memory when they are once known. Older children should read these stories for themselves in the authorised version. There is inspiration in its majestic cadences which

is lost in the best epitome. There are selections like Mr. Glazebrook's in the words of the Bible which can be used if they are thought necessary. Perhaps I might be allowed to add here that it is not wisdom or policy to be always teaching from the same great stories. That way lies satiety. There are plenty of other parts of the Bible which the child will find interesting. Even the history of the Kings of Israel becomes religious history, if it is read in the light of the prophetic books.

I said just now, and I should like to emphasise the point, that children should be trained in the morality of the Old Testament as well as in that of the New. The great lesson of the Old Testament is justice; that of the New, self-sacrifice; and although it is certainly true that love, which is "the fulfilling of the law," is the quality most easily appealed to and most readily operative within the family, it is well also from the first to stimulate the imaginative sense of what is due to others, whether we love them or not, which is the

principle of fairness. Every child can be taught the habit of putting himself in another's place, and "doing to others as he would they should do to him." Perhaps I can make my meaning clear by an illustration. In a house where I was once staying two small boys were visiting. A dispute had arisen between them about the possession of a ball, and the younger came to the hostess to settle the point. She was a good Christian woman, and probably at once thought of the two brothers in the Gospel who disputed over their inheritance; for, instead of getting at the facts of the case and settling the point by an appeal to the sense of fairness, she gave the young urchin a little homily on covetousness, and clinched it with the text, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Off went the boy, and presently he was heard shouting in the garden, "'Tom, Mrs. Blank says the Bible says it's 'more blessed to give than to receive,' so give me that ball." The lesson she was trying to teach made no impression, and she lost the chance of

enforcing a no less important principle. I should be inclined to rank fairness very high among the virtues that we should teach children from their earliest years. English children have that in them which responds to such teaching; and to strengthen the instinct for fairness and upright dealing is to do a good work for the future of England.

But then I must go on to say that all these virtues which we exhibit to children in the Bible stories and inculcate upon their own practice, must also be displayed in our own conduct to them, or our labour will be in vain. It is of no use for parents to say, "Do as I say, not as I do." Parents must say in effect with the Apostle, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." The child in any case will imitate them—

"Their whole vocation
Is endless imitation"

—and it rests with the parent what the copy shall be like. It is worth much to set a habit of inflexible justice; to have it felt in the family, not only that there *can* be

no appeal from any decision, but that there *need* be none. Froebel, I am told, traces the common obstinacy of children to their perpetual revolt against the injustice of parents: and I fear we are often unjust—from want of thought more than from want of will. We are busy, or in a hurry, and the point at issue is of such ludicrously trifling importance that we cannot be bothered with it; or we blame first and investigate afterwards; or we overwhelm innocent and guilty alike in a common condemnation, and then prose to them on Sunday about the justice of the Father in heaven.

Akin to the love of fairness is the love of truth, and this also we have carefully to plant and train: by story and precept, and still more by example. A carefulness of exact statement tells; and it should be required. I was shocked the other day by hearing a mother say before her children, in quite a free-and-easy way, “Of course I had to tell a lie about it.” I knew that what she meant wasn’t a lie at all; but the chil-

dren couldn't know it; and one grieved for the effect the supposed acknowledgment must have. May I hint also that truth-telling will come easier to children in families where the parents take pains to be just; for where they allow themselves in bursts of ill-temper, children are chary of running the risk of a storm by confessing a fault. We all instinctively avoid thunder.

Another virtue necessary to be taught is gratitude. I doubt if parents at the present day are sufficiently alive to the importance of teaching it. I don't mean that they would not enforce the lesson if they were reading the story of the "Ten Lepers"; but that they are chary of exacting it themselves from their children. For one thing, they are apt to be too lavish in their attentions and in their presents. To see a child in some well-to-do families go through the cargo of birthday or Christmas presents with less and less appetite, is a sight that makes the onlooker reflect. How much wiser to give fewer things, and let them arouse

gratitude instead of nausea. It is possible then, to choke gratitude. Sometimes its absence is simply due to want of reflection, and then it can be taught. A child's prayers should never lack thanksgivings, and at the risk of doing violence to their own sensitive feelings, parents should themselves insist on being thanked. The expression of gratitude will help to create the feeling.

And then, last, which is also "first and midst and without end," we must teach obedience. Some good people nowadays seem to think that to be made to obey cramps the natural development of the child's individuality and free will. This is nonsense. To learn obedience is the only way to learn self-control. Just as in things intellectual there can be no scholarship unless the pupil has been trained to attend, because his wits are all over the place; so in morals, there can be no character till the pupil has been trained to obey, because the impulses will be all over the place. I do not find that our Lord rescinded the fifth commandment; and,

indeed, though it belongs to the second table it comes in practice before those of the first. For if a child does not obey his father whom he has seen, how can he obey God whom he has not seen? In teaching obedience, I imagine, we should go to work as in other cases. There should be the illustration from stories in the Bible—there should especially be great stress laid upon the Kingship of Jesus, and His admission of children among the subjects of His kingdom, with the obligation of obedience which this implies. You will remember how popular this idea, of Jesus as the King, became under the teaching of Savonarola among the children of Florence; but when the idea is assimilated, there is endless hard work to be done, as every parent knows. The only rule for parents to observe is, first, to take care that their orders are just, and then to let them be inflexible. The modern cant about always giving children reasons for your orders is really not modern, but as old as Aristotle, who exposes its folly. Reasons come as the

children grow older; for a child to want a reason is only an excuse for postponing a duty. "Why must I do it?" means "How I hate doing it."

Let me conclude with a few remarks on learning by heart. I think the only safe rule here is to give nothing to be learnt that is beyond the child's understanding, because it is of the highest importance that religion should be a real thing in the child's experience. In mere matters of literature, it is often wise policy to let the children learn good things which are above their comprehension. They get pleasure out of the words and the rhythm, and in a dim way their imagination is fed. Also they bear the words in memory ever after, and they become luminous by degrees. But in religion, I should not run the risk. I should not at all mind letting a child say in a public Office things above its comprehension, because it would explain to itself that it would understand when it grew up; and all that the child picked up in memory this

way—the Psalms, for example, by saying them daily in matins or evensong—is so much clear gain; but I am quite sure that nothing should be *given* the child to learn that is above its comprehension at the time. Hymns which describe experiences to which the child cannot but be a stranger, or the awful facts of Redemption which to the child cannot convey truth because they cannot convey meaning, should never be given. And even psalms and hymns that convey the truths which the little child can appreciate should not be metaphorical in expression. People are fond of giving children the Twenty-third Psalm to learn; I suppose because it is short. And the thought of God's care is certainly one that you wish to impress. But the metaphor of the sheep and the shepherd comes between the child and the sense. "The Lord is my Shepherd" means to the child just nothing; and it is not made clearer by telling the child that *it* is the sheep. I know I was set to learn the Epistles much too young, and some of them I still

feel a disgust at. The things a child should learn are the things it can understand and use—things like the “Duty to my Neighbour”—expressions in which, like “To do to all men as I would they should do to me,” are almost startling in their vividness and reality. And reality, let me repeat once more, is the thing to aim at beyond everything else.

XVI.

BIBLE-READING IN THE HOME.

A PAPER READ AT THE LIVERPOOL CHURCH CONGRESS, 1904.

SCHOOLMASTERS have been telling us of late that the children from intelligent homes come to them much less intelligently grounded in religious ideas than was once the case; and if religion be, what we all think it, the one thing needful, their report must cause us serious anxiety. Can we find a reason for such a state of things, and can we suggest a remedy? The reason is not far to seek. It does not lie in indifference. No parents could be indifferent to their children's highest welfare. It lies, I believe, in a vague feeling that the Bible has somehow been proved to be a different thing from what it was to *our* parents; that it is not quite so divine a book as *we* were taught to think it, and that we cannot therefore with

self-respect reproduce the language used about it to ourselves, while we lack the knowledge for adopting a fresh point of view. The consequence is that Bible instruction is deliberately left either to governesses who are supposed able to use the old language, or to schoolmasters who presumably have discovered a substitute. But such an expedient cannot be called heroic. Might I, then, venture to suggest to any fathers of families who feel a difficulty of the sort, that they should not let it master them, but that they should clear their minds as to what they themselves have really gained from the Bible, so as to see what they can confidently teach their children. Would it not be true to say that what they have learned is the true nature and character of God, and the true nature and character of God-like men? If that were so, it would follow that they might shape their Bible lessons so as to teach their children what God is, and what God wishes them to be; not disdaining the clue put into their hands by our noble catechism.

In regard to all Bible reading, whether with older or younger children, there are certain axioms which ought to govern our instructions:—

(1) We must teach reverence for the Bible. Some of us, as I have already said, have undoubtedly suffered a shock in finding that the particular theory of inspiration in which we were bred has had to give way before the facts of criticism, and in consequence we may have come to rank the Bible in our estimation with other books. But a simple comparison with other books should suffice to convince us that what has been at fault was not the Bible's inspiration, but our theory of it. It is not while we search the Scriptures that we doubt their Divine origin. And so I would plead for teaching the old respect and the old love for the Bible as the book of books, the book that contains the revelation that Almighty God has given of Himself to mankind, dimly and by degrees through patriarch and prophet, and at last and perfectly through the Only-begotten Son.

(2) The second axiom is complementary ; that the Bible was made for man, and not man for the Bible. It is not a charm that works apart from our intelligence. This will be our warrant for exercising a free choice in the passages we give our children to read, just as we exercise choice as to the lessons read in public worship. The guiding principle must be edification. Many books have been published recently, which select the passages best suited for the instruction of young people, and although there is advantage in accustoming children to handle their own Bibles, to follow the lessons in church, and so on, there is also advantage in not putting into their hands what we should prefer their not reading. But if selections are used, the passages chosen should still be mastered in the very words of our Bible. Some one once said, that whether or not the Bible was inspired, there could be no doubt as to the inspiration of the authorised English version ; and the paradox expresses a truth. For it is in large measure in the words of the Bible heroes that their

characters are embalmed, and these sayings, refined to the utmost power of expression through the genius of many generations of English Churchmen, fix themselves in the children's memories and mould their action. "To obey is better than sacrifice," "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth," "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"—such sayings bring with them airs from the spiritual country,⁸⁷ and have a converting power upon the soul.

(3) A third axiom, with which children cannot too soon be made familiar, is that the Bible is less a book than a library of books, covering in its history a long period of time, during which the revelation of God's mind and will was proceeding gradually; so that the notions men had of God and of goodness were growing truer and clearer from age to age. Children find no difficulty in understanding this when it is explained; and when it is understood, some things in the early literature that would else offend, and rightly offend, their fresh and sensitive conscience, especially

as to feelings and actions attributed to God, will cease to be a stumbling-block. If a child, after reading a certain famous dialogue in the fourteenth chapter of Numbers, says to us, "How could Moses think he loved the children of Israel better than God loved them?" we may be content to thank God that "the least in the Kingdom of Heaven" knows more of His true nature than even the meekest of the old prophets.

(4) A fourth axiom is that, for our catechetical purpose, historical truth is subordinate to moral truth. From this two considerations follow—first, that instruction in the Bible history should always be instruction in righteousness. A child who knows the details of the story of Elijah will be no better for the knowledge unless he has been shown the moral difference between Jehovah-worship and Baal-worship, as it was writ large in the murder of Naboth. The second conclusion is that while we need not trouble young children with the speculations of critics as to the existence of an imaginative element in particular

narratives of the Old Testament so long as they are spiritually true, because our purpose is edification; it is of the utmost consequence that we should allow nothing to be taught them as true which fails of truth in the higher sense. An instance will illustrate the distinction: No young child is the worse for believing that God prepared a sea-beast to preserve Jonah, and shut the lions' mouths to preserve Daniel (even if he came later to recognise that the books of Jonah and Daniel contain what the Jews called *midrashim*, "symbolic narratives"), because the deposit left in his mind is a conviction of the goodness and almightiness of God; but every Christian child must be the worse for believing that God sent two she-bears to kill forty-two children in fulfilment of a prophet's curse. When we come to tales of this latter sort, which sink palpably below the level of the tradition in which they are preserved (and they are very few), we must pass them by, just as we pass them by in the order of our Sunday lectionary.

(5) A final axiom concerns the reading of

St. Paul's Epistles with elder children. They should be read in sections corresponding to the argument, and (until such time as we have a corrected authorised version) in the version known as revised, because that version marks the sections, and in many places elucidates the argument. Further, such reading of the Epistles should be accompanied by instruction in the meaning of St. Paul's technical terms. Every theologian has his technical terms, and St. Paul has a great many; and experience proves that they do not explain themselves. When our young students have realised that St. Paul attached quite definite meanings to what may seem to them such vague expressions as "faith" and "grace," "the world" and "the flesh," "election" and "redemption," they will read his letters with far more interest and far more spiritual profit.

May I add a word, in conclusion, as to the division of the duty of Bible-teaching between parents. Circumstances will differ in different homes; but in the ideal household, while to the mother would fall a short Bible-reading

before bedtime in the Gospels or Psalms, a weekly lesson, to be given on Sunday, would as certainly fall to the head of the house; and the father who undertook such a lesson would find a new interest for the day of rest far surpassing golf. I would entreat any fathers whose consciences are touched in this matter to rouse themselves from what is not a noble apathy. I would remind them that to bring up children in unfamiliarity with the Bible is to deprive them of the greatest safeguard against the besetting peril of the age—profanity, a distemper most contagious and most difficult of cure. If criticism is the bugbear that hinders any parent from what should be the delight, as well as the duty, of teaching his children from the Bible, I would urge him to discover at first-hand what criticism has to say for itself. By so doing he would find, first of all, a revival of interest in the Bible, and through that, I do not hesitate to say, a revival of trust in it.

XVII.

JOHN RUSKIN.

A MEMORIAL ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE UNVEILING OF A MONUMENT IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, HERNE HILL, FEB. 1901.

“The words of the wise are as goads.”—ECCLES. xii. 11.

THE words of Holy Scripture which have been chosen as a motto for this memorial tablet in your church to John Ruskin admirably express the service which Ruskin performed to his generation. It was essentially the service of *stimulus*. It was the work of a prophet. His cry was, “Oh, that my people would see and know, and consider, and understand.” Often it was, “Their ears are heavy, and their eyes have they closed, lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart.” But, in the event, because he refused ever to despair—because he went on with his

message whether we listened or not—he has had a prophet's reward. We are building his sepulchre; and we acknowledge now with gratitude that he has opened our eyes to some of the beauty and the mystery of the world in which we live.

(i.) It was, first of all, the *beauty* of the world that he tried to show us. He lavished his marvellous gift of painting landscape in words in order to goad us to open our eyes and look frankly at Nature, and see for ourselves whether 'Turner was after all such a madman as we thought; whether the light *we* had never seen on sea or land was not there after all; whether Nature was not even a finer draughtsman and a more splendid colourist than her most devoted and observant disciple. And though many of us, perhaps, enjoyed the magnificent prophesyings of "Modern Painters" for their own sake as literature, just as the Israelites of Ezekiel's day listened to his prophecy as "the very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument," yet

there were those who were afterwards to reform our modern English school of painting who did react upon the stimulus and begin to use their eyes, with what wonderful effect we know.

(ii.) And then, having tried to open our eyes to the beauty of Nature, Ruskin went on to show us that, as beauty was the Creator's token of joy in His labour, so beauty would always accompany creative labour in which the children of God took noble and honest joy; at least that it could not else be looked for. It was the stimulus of this teaching, most clearly contained in the "Stones of Venice," and notably in the celebrated chapter upon the "Nature of Gothic," which early in life fired the genius of William Morris. And if you consider the change that has passed over the ordinary interior of an English home, the change to simplicity, to brightness of colour, to refinement in form—a change showing itself in many various ways, amongst others in a desire to accumulate in our houses objects of beauty, just because the year

beautiful—you will admit that in this way also Ruskin has achieved a great end. For although it is quite possible to love beauty without the added sense that it is a revelation of the Divine Spirit in the world and in man, yet if beauty is that, it is surely well that it should be loved.

(iii.) But as Ruskin's life went on it was more and more the underlying principle of God's government of the world that he laboured to impress. Englishmen seemed to him to be living more and more without noble purpose in their lives; and he began to feel that he had been working like an unskilful gardener, who gave his labour to the branches instead of to the root, in speaking to us of making beautiful works of art before we had made our lives noble. It was a profound conviction of his that the greatest works of art belonged to periods in the world's history when men's lives were inspired with generous purposes and with faith in divine ideals; and so he turned aside from his first endeavour—to stimulate our percep-

tion of the beautiful—in order to devote himself to the prior work of stimulating our perception of what was sound and true in morals and social life. Ruskin brought us face to face with the fact that, although the talent for painting, or architecture, or poetry is an incommunicable gift of God not to be gainsaid—for no man can make himself an artist—yet what the man is in his deep nature will come out in his work, and make that work either spiritual and capable of inspiring the hearts of other men, or make it earthly, sensual, and devilish. And so he set out upon a crusade, which seemed to many artists and men of letters mere midsummer madness, the motto of which was that great word of Christ's: "Make the tree good, then its fruit will be good"; "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added." You want, he would say, a great national art. You want a great school of painting, of architecture—well, what ideas have you that are worth expressing? What do you worship? As far as I can see, you

worship nothing but mammon, and your soul is vulgar.

And so he declared a Holy War against the current Political Economy, against the current notions of Education, against the current notions of Religion, all in the interests of man's soul and the good life. To that warfare, which was indeed a long and hard and bitter struggle, he devoted all the powers at his command — an analytic gift which Mazzini declared to be the most powerful in Europe; a gift of humour and of caustic wit and exquisite irony, under which the pompous fool felt very uncomfortable; a gift of passion and of imagination which made his words burn and flash as no other words have done in our generation. When he spoke of the reckless luxury, the deforming mechanism, and the squalid misery of modern life men at first shrugged their shoulders and told him to stick to art criticism; but in time the truth won its way. His words were as goads. Kick against the pricks as men might, the pricks asserted themselves.

Men, especially young men, began to ponder, and the result has been a revolution in our books of political economy, and a large measure of Christian principle introduced into the relations of capital and labour, workmen and employers.

And those of us whose fortunes have not been organised on this large scale have, in our smaller spheres, felt and owned the stimulus of his searching criticism. Speaking simply for myself, I cannot exaggerate the debt that I feel I owe to one little volume that was given me twenty-five years ago for a school prize—a volume that contained the three famous lectures called “Sesame and Lilies.” I cannot understand the composition of the human being who could read the last of the three—that entitled “The Mystery of Life and its Arts”—without deep searchings of conscience. I believe there are many people who, under Divine Providence, owe their conversion, their adoption of the service of Jesus Christ in preference to the service of self, to the impulse received from such writings of Ruskin.

But (and this is the last point I wish to make) Ruskin did more even than teach. He wrought. We are accustomed to point out, in the case of our Master, that while His words fell on deaf ears, the story of His life and death touched the imagination of the world. In its measure, this is true of all the saints and prophets, and it is true of Ruskin. At first, of course, those who scoffed at his teaching scoffed tenfold at his practice. "Here was a man," they said, "flying in the face of acknowledged scientific laws, in deference to his own private interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount, which everybody knows as well as he does, and of course respects, but obviously it was not meant to be obeyed in the letter." But Ruskin went his own way, founded his Guild of St. George, and endeavoured, instead of preaching to the multitudes who would not listen, to train some few men in the principles which he believed to be true.

And at last, after many years, the reaction came. What passed through men's minds I

may represent in the words of a not altogether friendly critic¹: "Here is the greatest master of the English tongue, one of the most splendid lights of our noble literature, one to whom a dozen paths of ambition and power lay open, who had everything that could be offered by genius, fame, wealth, social popularity, and intense sensitiveness to all lovely things. And this man, after thirty years of untiring labour, devotes himself to train, teach, delight, and inspire a band of young men, girls, workmen, children, all who choose to come round him. He lavishes the whole of his fortune upon them; he brings to their door his treasures of art, science, literature, and poetry; he founds and endows museums; he offers these costly and precious collections to the people; he wears out his life in teaching them the elements of art, the elements of manufactures, the elements of science; he shows workmen how to work, girls how to draw, to sing, to play; he gives up to them his wealth, his genius, his peace, his whole

¹ Mr. Frederic Harrison.

life. He is not content with writing books in his study, with enjoying art at home or abroad; he must carry his message into the streets. He gives himself up, not to write down beautiful thoughts; he seeks to build up a beautiful world."

I venture to submit to you that such a "going down into the streets," or, as I would prefer to say, such an attempt to regenerate by his ideas some small portion of the actual world, however much it may be at first censured as Quixotic, and however much it may blunder in the first efforts to give concrete life to ideas, is often just the impulse that is required to convince the world that the ideas offered them are really ideas, and not mere words, however beautiful. The proof of the fertility of an idea must lie in its actual fruitfulness, and it is only when the corn of wheat is content to fall into the ground and mix with the humble earth that its fruitfulness can be proved. I am not sure that the words of Ruskin which have gone straightest and deepest into the hearts

of his countrymen have not been some of those which were primarily addressed to a small and despised company in the pages of "Fors Clavigera."

THE END.





